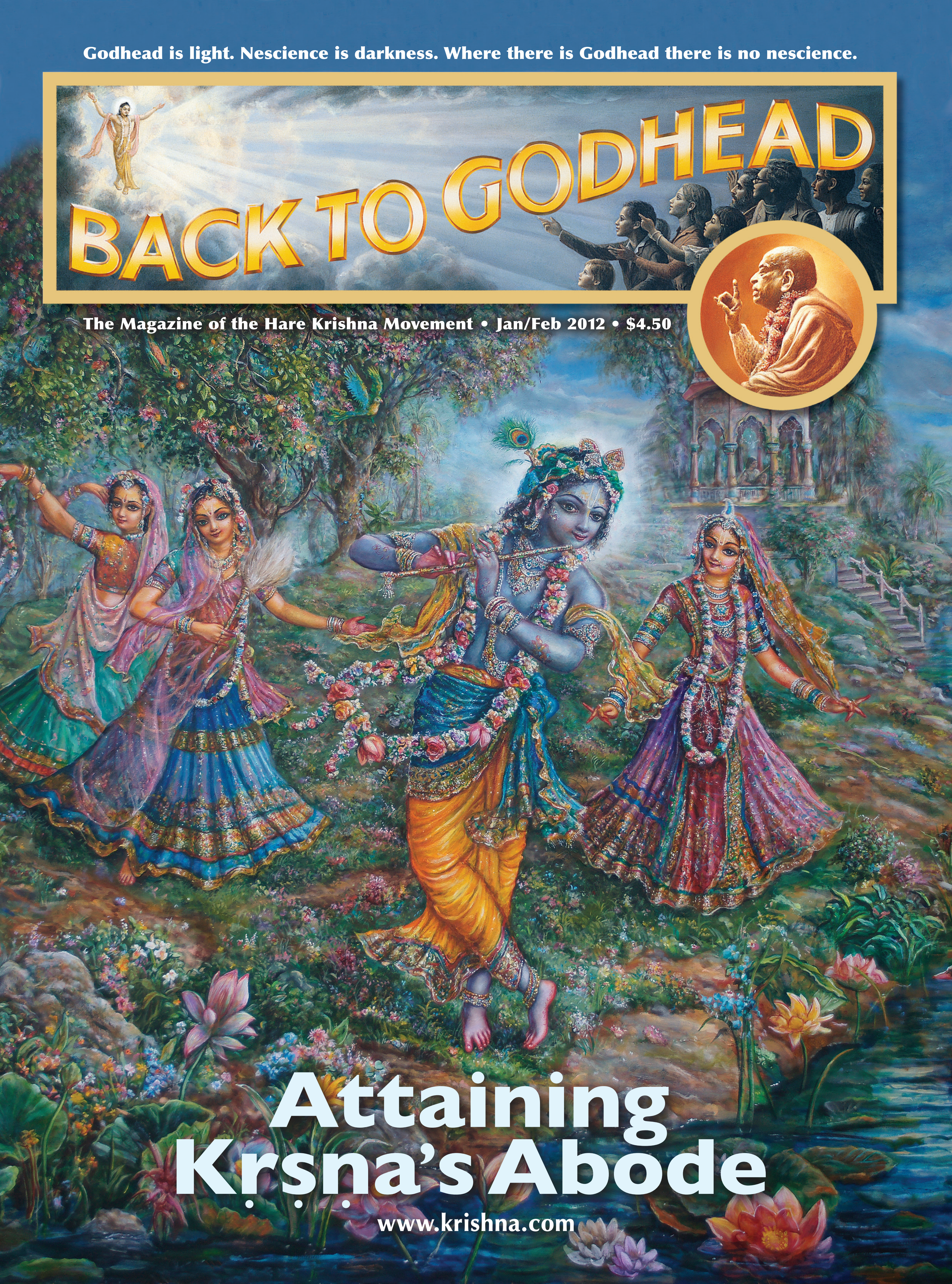
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Jan/Feb 2012 • $4.50



Attaining Kṛṣṇa's Abode

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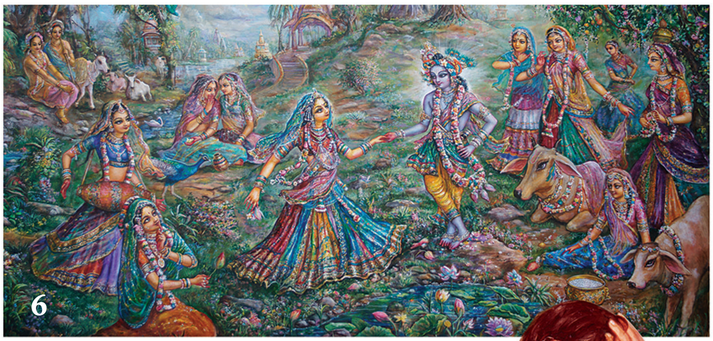
BACK to GODH

Founded 1944 • Vol. 46, No. 1 • January / February 2012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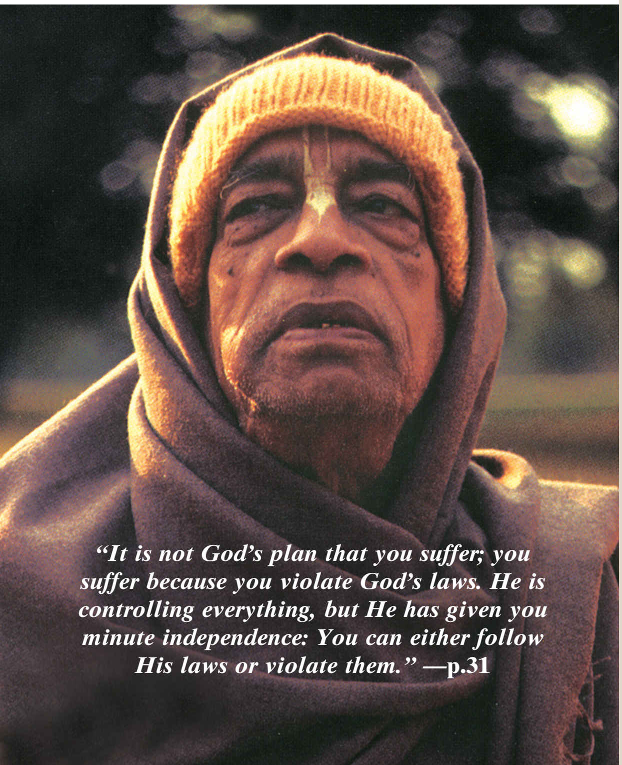
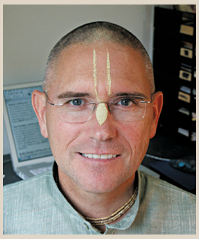
COVER If we reach Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental kingdom, where He enjoys eternally with His intimate devotees, we'll never have to return to this world of suffering. Please see the article beginning on page 6. (Detail of a painting by Puṣkara Dāsa.)



"It is not God's plan that you suffer; you suffer because you violate God's laws. He is controlling everything, but He has given you minute independence: You can either follow His laws or violate them." —p.31

WELCOME

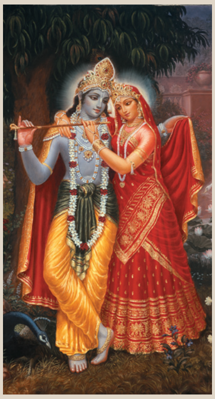


The title of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture in this issue—"Attaining Kṛṣṇa's Abode"—expresses what, according to Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, should be the goal of every human being. Kṛṣṇa's transcendental kingdom, as Prabhupāda calls it in his lecture, is the only place where we can fulfill our innermost desires.

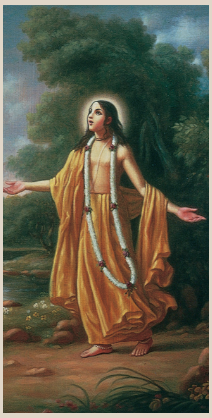
A few articles in this issue spotlight the challenges we souls meet in the material world. Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa helps us understand karma and its connection to our suffering. In "Face to Face with Frustration," Murāri Gupta Dāsa explains some spiritual solutions he draws on when faced with inevitable setbacks. Yugāvatāra Dāsa's "The Crow Story that Changed My Life" teaches that the satisfaction eluding us in material life can be found only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And in "An Appointment with Mr. Death," Vraja Vihārī Dāsa tells how he witnessed that a devotee of Kṛṣṇa can cheerfully face even the ultimate challenge.

To take our Kṛṣṇa consciousness from theory to realization, pure chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names is required, as Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa explains in "Revolutionize Your Heart and Revolutionize the World." And in "Kṛṣṇa on the Page," Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī shows how a spiritual revolution could even begin in children's reading class.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO
GODHEAD
The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

The Universal Theme Of Passover

I was somewhat surprised at the article "Six Essential Questions," by Satyarāja Dāsa, in the November/December issue. I have been a friend of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement since the late 1960s, so I am familiar with what Vaiṣṇavas believe, but I felt Satyarāja's explanation of Passover might inadvertently leave BTG readers with the wrong impression of what Jews believe. Far from being merely a sectarian holiday, the theme of Passover is universal: people of all religions have lived under tyranny and hoped for deliverance. At the Seder (which in most American homes is conducted in English and Hebrew, not Yiddish) participants read the story of how the Jews were slaves in ancient Egypt, and how we finally attained our freedom. In prayer and in song, we express our gratitude for what God did for us; we also pray that those who are still in bondage in other countries will one day be set free. Thank you for letting me clarify why Passover is such an important and joyous holiday.

Donna L. Halper, Ph.D.
Lesley University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Identity of Advaita Ācārya

I have just been blessed to receive the current issue of BTG (November/December). A reply to a letter has a curious reference about Advaita Ācārya being the incarnation of Lord Śiva. While the transcendental abilities of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are always above our mundane comprehension, I remember, from what I have read in Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations, that Advaita Ācārya is an incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu.

Daruka Dāsa
Via the Internet

Our reply: It was somewhat imprecise for us to write that Lord Śiva incarnates as Advaita Ācārya. In fact, it is Sadāśiva who incarnates as Advaita Ācārya. Sadāśiva is a Viṣṇu-tattva expansion of Mahā-Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, and Śiva is an expansion of Sadāśiva.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in a letter (April 6, 1975): "Regarding your question, you may refer to [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*], *Ādi-līlā,* Chapter 6, Text 79, along with the purport. The answer is there. The basic understanding is that Sadāśiva is an expansion of Mahā-Viṣṇu and that same Sadāśiva incarnates as Advaita Ācārya. Therefore since Advaita Ācārya is an incarnation of Sadāśiva, who is nondifferent from Mahā-Viṣṇu, we can say that Advaita Ācārya is an incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu."

A Treat for Mind and Soul

Back to Godhead is the best magazine I have ever read. It provides an impetus to work hard in spirituality and teaches us how to use Kṛṣṇa consciousness in our lives as a tool for happiness. Its articles are really a treat for mind and soul.

Dr. Vivek Sharma
Via the Internet

The Mahā-mantra

What is the special benediction of the *mahā-mantra*?

Tim
Via the Internet

Our reply: The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the recommended method for becoming self-realized in this age, Kali-yuga, which is very difficult in many ways. People are always disturbed and distracted, it is difficult for them to control their minds and senses, and the environment favors a very unspiritual way of life. Intoxication, gambling, meat-eating, and free sexual connection are all commonplace but highly deleterious for anyone interested in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. Society is very materialistic and working to train people to believe that the more things they can get, the more happiness they will find. But this is a lie. Happiness comes from reconnecting you, the soul, with the Supreme Soul, God, or Kṛṣṇa.

Considering all this, the Vedic scriptures recommend the *mahā-mantra* for this age. One can chant it anywhere, it is easy to chant, and it is a very powerful sound composed of names of God and His energies. Since God and His name are identical, by chanting this mantra one can get in touch with God, Kṛṣṇa, and get to know Him. To know Him is to love Him, and so this mantra can help you develop a loving relationship with Him.

As a doctor may give medicine but also recommend a diet and exercise, the effectiveness of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is enhanced by a balanced life free from meat-eating, intoxication, gambling, and illicit sexual connection. One should also associate with people endeavoring to become spiritually enlivened, read transcendental literature, and focus the mind with deep concentration while chanting. The *mahā-mantra* is so powerful that it will purify one of sinful karma and begin to awaken the realization of one's spiritual connection with Kṛṣṇa. That is the special benediction of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*

Preaching to the Faithless

It's written somewhere that we should not preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to persons who are completely materialistic and not interested. Can you explain that restriction?

Srikanth
Via the Internet

Our reply: One of the ten offenses in chanting is to preach the glories of the Lord to the faithless. But in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 10.67, Prabhupāda writes in his purport: "Even though a person is rejected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotees of the Lord do not reject him; therefore the Lord's devotees are more merciful than the Lord Himself. Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura thus sings, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā:* one cannot be relieved from the material clutches without engaging in the service of pure devotees. The Lord Himself may sometimes be very hard, but the devotees are always kind."

So although Kṛṣṇa may suggest not preaching to those not interested, the devotees can't stand to see the soul suffering in this world, and so they take all risks and preach the Lord's glories even to those not qualified to receive it.

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.

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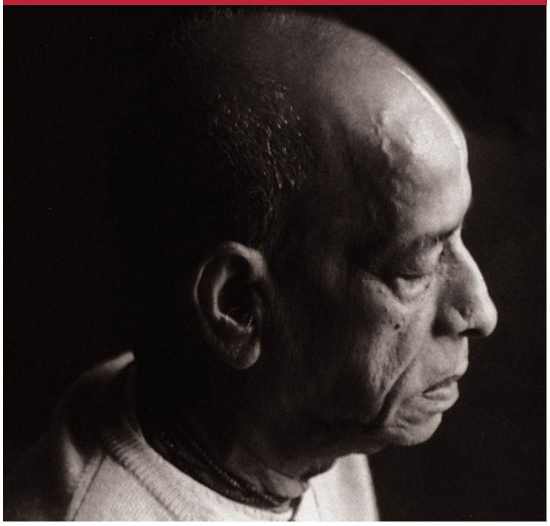
FOUNDER'S LECTURE

New York City—November 17, 1966



ATTAINING KṚṢṆA'S ABODE

From the Bhagavad-gītā *we learn about the spiritual world and the means to go there.*

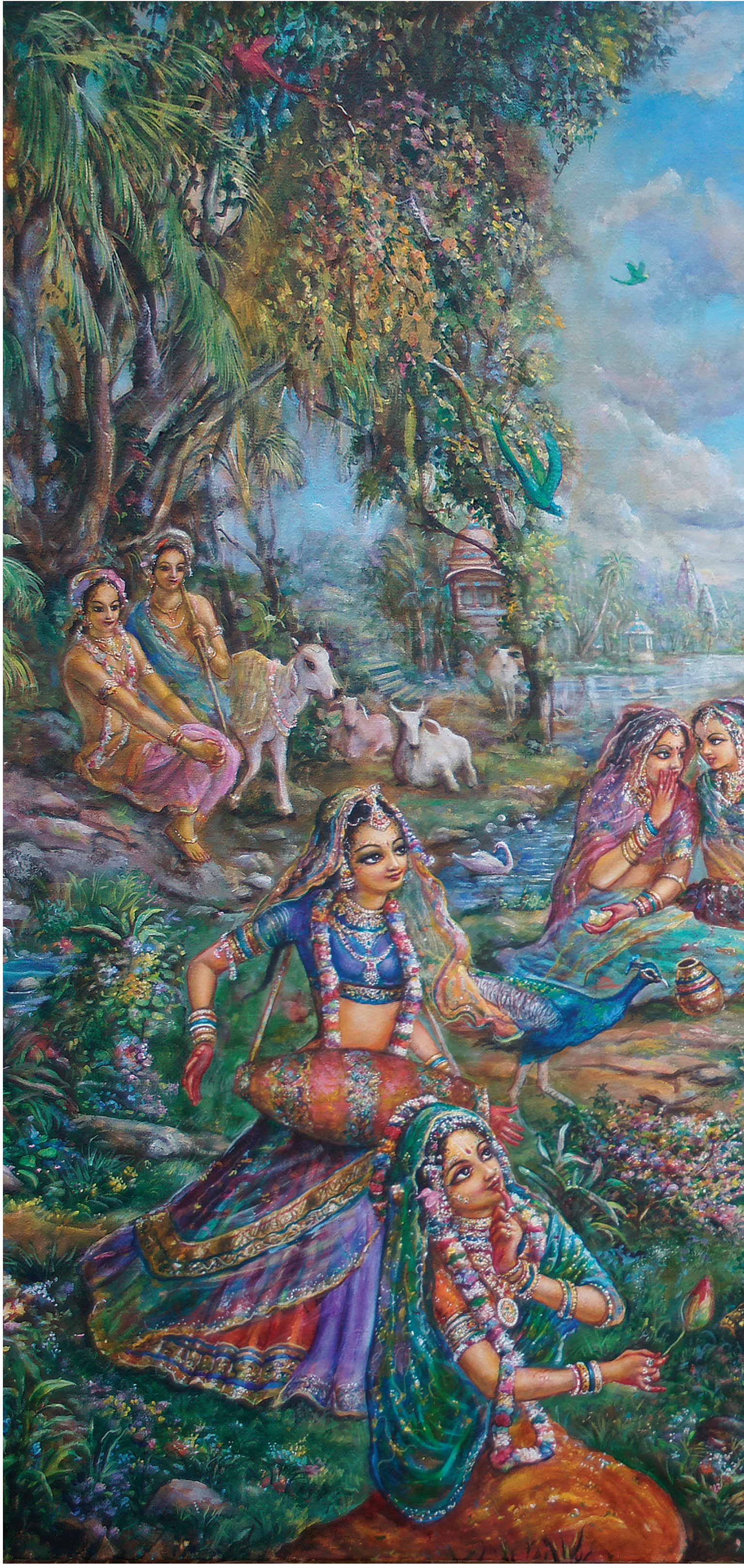
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

---

mām upetya punar janma
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ
saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ

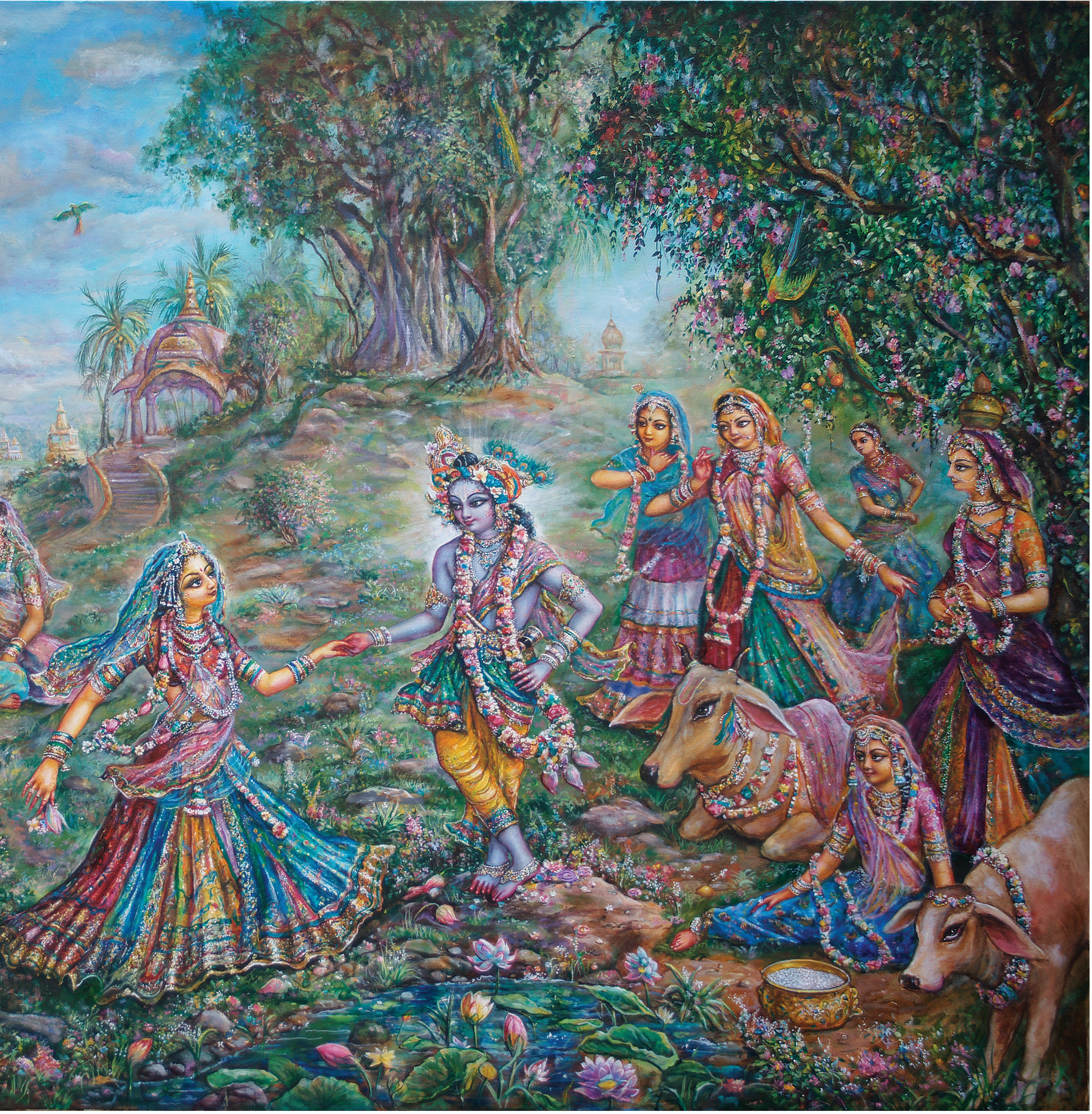
"After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogis in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection."—*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.15



Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa

KṚṢṆA SAYS, "Anyone who comes to Me . . ." Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, but still, He has His abode. The difference between Kṛṣṇa and the ordinary living being is that we can be at one place only but Kṛṣṇa can be in all places.

Kṛṣṇa's abode in the transcendental kingdom is called Goloka Vṛndāvana. The city in India named Vrindavan, where I have come from, is called Bhauma Vrindavan, which means the same Goloka Vṛndāvana descended to earth. Just as Kṛṣṇa descends to earth out of His own



internal potency, His *dhāma,* or His abode—Vṛndāvana *dhāma*—also descends. In other words, when Kṛṣṇa descends to earth He manifests Himself in that particular land. Therefore that land, Vrindavan, is sacred.

Kṛṣṇa has His own abode in the spiritual world. And Kṛṣṇa says, "Anyone who comes to My abode is not born again in the material world, which is full of threefold miseries." Such a person is called a *mahātmā.* Perhaps you have heard this word. Our leader Gandhi was known as Mahatma, but *mahātmā* is not the title of a politician. *Mahātmā* means the first-class Kṛṣṇa conscious person who is eligible to enter the abode of Kṛṣṇa. He is called a *mahātmā.*

We should use all the facilities we have as human beings to become a *mahātmā,* or become eligible to enter the kingdom of Kṛṣṇa. Because if we can do that, then for us there will be no more birth in the material world, which is full of threefold miseries. We have several times discussed what these threefold miseries are, but every one of you knows that, some way or other, we are in a miserable condition, either pertaining to the mind, the body, some natural disturbance, or from friends or animals. There is always some kind of misery inflicted upon us. That is the situation of the material world.

Kṛṣṇa says that this world is a place where you cannot avoid these miseries. It is meant for that. Unless the miseries are there, you cannot come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are an impetus and help to elevate you to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. An intelligent person thinks, "I do not want miseries, but the miseries are inflicted upon me by force." Nobody wants miseries. Then he should ask, "Why are these miseries inflicted upon me by force?" Unfortunately, the modern civilization sets this question aside: "Oh, let me suffer. Let me cover suffering by intoxication." You see? But as soon as the intoxication is over, again I am at the same point. That is not the solution.

You cannot solve the misery of your life by artificial intoxication. You have to solve it by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you always remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then gradually you'll develop spiritually and you will be able to quit your material body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then immediately you'll be transferred to the planet where Kṛṣṇa is. That is the process. And if you can attain that situation, that is perfection. That is the highest perfection of life, *saṁsiddhiṁ paramām.*

The Desire for other Planets

People may inquire, "Well, you say that to enter the planet of Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfection, but we are trying to enter the moon. Is that not perfection?"

The tendency to enter the higher planets is always there in the human mind. The living entity is called *sarva-ga*—he wants to travel everywhere. That is his nature. Sometimes you Americans go to India or Europe. You cannot stay stagnant at a place. So the tendency to try to enter the moon is not a new thing. Whether by yoga or some other process, everyone is trying to enter the higher planets.

The universe is divided into fourteen planetary systems, fourteen divisions. We are in a middle planetary system. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ* . . . : "What to speak of the moon or the sun or Venus, if you even enter into the highest planet, Brahmaloka, still the repetition of birth and death is there." Now, say I'll live eighty years. Now I am seventy-one. So after nine years I'll have to change this body. No one can stay here by some scientific process. That is not allowed. You have to change your body. Just as you change your old dress, you have to change your old body and enter a new body.

We should be very serious about this problem—how to get our eternal life, full of bliss and knowledge.

We have information from the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literature that all planets are full of living entities. Don't think that we are here on the earth and all other planets are vacant. From your experience you can see that no place on earth is vacant, without living entities. Even if you dig into the earth, you'll find some worms. Go deep into the water, and you'll find some living entities. In the air you'll find so many living entities. So how can you conclude that other planets are without living entities? They are all full of living entities.

Kṛṣṇa says, "My dear Arjuna, if you enter even the highest planet, still you'll have to accept the repetition of birth and death. You cannot get rid of it." But He also says, "If you reach My planet, then you haven't got to come back to this miserable material world. There will be no rebirth. You'll get your eternal life."

The Duty of Human Life

We should be very serious about this problem—how to get our eternal life, full of bliss and knowledge. That is the duty of human life. People have forgotten the aim of life. They do not know that their self-interest is to get eternal, blissful life in the spiritual planets. Why have they forgotten? They have been entrapped by the material attraction of skyscrapers and big factories and political activities. Such persons should know, "However many skyscrapers I may make, I'll not be allowed to live here. I'll have to leave, and I do not know where I am going."

We should not spoil our energy to build skyscrapers. We should employ our energy to elevate ourselves to Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that after leaving the material body we can enter the spiritual planets.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the necessity of life. It is not a religious formula or some spiritual recreation. No. It is the most important thing we should imbibe in our life. Kṛṣṇa is stressing this point again and again.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes other planets. Many yogis and philosophers aim at being elevated to the higher planets by their yogic process. Why? Because the facilities of life in the higher planets are better than on this planet. The duration of life, the enjoyment, the amenities—everything is better, thousands of times better. So people think, "I shall go to the heavenly planets, or to this or that planet."

The *Bhagavad-gītā* gives a nice description of the highest planet of this universe, Brahmaloka, the planet of Lord Brahmā. Twelve hours there equal 4.3 billion of our years. Lord Brahmā lives one hundred years of that time scale—trillions of our years. But even there, after living trillions of years, you'll have to die. Death is there. Unless you go to the spiritual planets, there is no escape from death.

When each of Brahmā's days is finished, the lower planetary systems become covered in water. There is devastation. And when Brahmā wakes up, then creation begins again. That is the law of creation. During Brahmā's daytime of twelve hours, this material manifestation of planets is seen. But when there is nighttime, all these planetary systems become submerged in a devastation of water. That is the nature of the material world. When the planetary systems become submerged in water, all living entities die.

Three fourths of this planet is covered with water. One day there will be no water, simply land. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "But, My dear Arjuna, beyond this place of 'sometimes appearing, sometimes disappearing' is another nature."

The Source for Spiritual Information

Just take this information from the *Gītā.* We cannot calculate the length and breadth of this universe, but there are millions and millions of universes like this within the material world. Above the material world is another sky, called the spiritual sky. In that sky the planets are all eternal. And there life is eternal also.

This material manifestation is only one fourth of the whole manifestation, both spiritual and material. You'll find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42), *ekāṁśena sthito jagat. Ekāṁśa* means one fourth. This material manifestation is one fourth of the total. The three-fourths part is beyond this material sky. The material manifestation has a ball-like covering. After penetrating that covering millions and millions of miles away, you can enter the spiritual sky.

You have experience of the material nature. Similarly, there is another, spiritual nature. Here also you have experience of the material nature and the spiritual nature. How is that? You yourself are a combination of matter and spirit. You are yourself spirit, and as long as you are within the body, within matter, it is moving. As soon as you are out of the body, it is as good as stone. So you can perceive here, within yourself, what is matter and what is spirit.

There is a spiritual world. There are two natures, the material nature and the spiritual nature. The spiritual nature is called the superior nature, and the material nature is called the inferior nature. Beyond the material nature there is spirit, the superior nature. We get this information from the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Seventh Chapter.

Now, it is not possible to understand these things by experiments. With telescopes you can see millions and millions of stars, but you cannot approach them. Your senses are so insufficient that you cannot approach them. Just try to understand how incapable you are. Don't try to understand God and God's kingdom by experiments. That is foolishness. It is not possible. You have to understand by hearing *Bhagavad-gītā.* There is no other way. For example, you cannot understand who is your father by experimental knowledge. You have to simply believe your mother. Similarly, you have to believe the *Bhagavad-gītā.* Then you can get all this information.

Realized Knowledge

There is no possibility of getting this knowledge by experiment. But if you become advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you'll realize it. I am firmly convinced about what I am speaking. I am not blindly speaking. This knowledge will be revealed to you. If you stick to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you'll actually understand this knowledge: "Yes, there is God. There is a spiritual kingdom, and I have to go there. I must prepare myself to go there."

These are all practical things. If you take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you'll understand all these practical things, and the whole problem of your life will be solved.

Thank you very much.

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna. (Cited as Bg.)

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śāstra—scriptures, especially the Vedic scriptures of India.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

GROWING FROM A CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

Raised as a Christian in India, a young man discovers the eternal religion, the jewel of his cultural heritage.

By Vijay Mathias

IN JUNE 2001 I joined the training department at AurionPro Solutions, a software company in Mumbai. One day, a smiling man entered the office and introduced himself as Satish More. He worked there but had been away, and since I was a new employee, we had never met. After getting to know each other a little, he gave me some sweets. He said he had just returned from a two-week trip to Jagannatha Puri, Orissa, where he had attended the famous Rathayātrā festival. He had brought the sweets from the festival for everyone in the firm.

After that meeting, I noticed that when leaving the office or arriving, Satish was always murmuring something, with his right hand in a small cloth bag. When I inquired about it, he told me the bag contained sacred beads and that he was chanting a mantra. I was raised in the Christian faith and had seen my family members chanting prayers on rosary beads, so the concept was familiar. But seeing a twenty-two-year-old professional openly chanting on beads was unusual. I was amazed.

Questions and Answers

I started to observe Satish more closely. Almost everyone in our firm drank tea, but when the boy who delivered tea would approach Satish, he would refuse. This intrigued me, as I was a tea addict, drinking six cups a day. He was also a vegetarian, and he wore beads around his neck that seemed connected to his religion.

We shared part of our commute, and on our way home together we discussed philosophy. I considered myself a fairly pious person and questioned him on his practices. One question led to another, and many times I challenged him based on my limited knowledge of Hindu theology. Satish would answer all my questions patiently. I challenged him about such things as vegetarianism, deity worship, chanting, offering food, and drinking tea and coffee, and he defeated me again and again with his in-depth analyses and references to scriptural texts. I used to delight in nonvegetarian food, and was bowled over by his conviction that vegetarianism is good for spiritual progress and the greater good of humanity. He told me he regularly visited the ISKCON temple, where the members practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is also known as *sanātana-dharma,* the "eternal religion," he told me.

Our discussions on Christianity and Kṛṣṇa consciousness went on for six months. I began to realize that all religions essentially teach the same thing and lead to the same ultimate goal. I gave up my previous misconception that Christianity is the only way to salvation. I had watched people of different faiths, and Hinduism appeared to me to be a mix of people worshiping different demigods, each claiming their god to be supreme. My discussions with Satish changed my perspective, and I became receptive to the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I began to understand the importance of finding a guru. Satish mentioned that his spiritual master, His Holiness Rādhānātha Mahārāja, was Jewish by birth but had taken up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I was surprised, and keen to meet Mahārāja.

The words I had read in the Bible and heard during Gospel readings at church came alive through his explanations and realizations.

Introduced to ISKCON

Satish became a friend I could trust and share anything with. I told him of my desire to visit the temple, and he invited me one Saturday. At the temple he served me *kicchari* and *halava.* I had never tasted anything so wonderful in my life. I saw the deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha and bought a couple of small books written by Śrīla Prabhupāda, as well as *Christianity and Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: Conversations Between the Rev. Alvin V. P. Hart and Satyarāja Dāsa Adhikārī.*

I had read a number of books on religion and philosophy, and I noticed how each author tried to prove that his faith is superior to others. When I started reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, however, I noticed that he seemed to be motivated by something else. For example, I was surprised to read, "Jesus Christ is the son of God, the representative of God . . . our guru . . . our spiritual master." I realized that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nonsectarian and that all the names by which various religions address God refer to the same Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "To practice *bhakti-yoga* means to become free from designations like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, this or that, and simply to serve God." This statement shook the foundations of my spiritual thinking. Śrīla Prabhupāda's explanations removed the weeds of my incorrect understanding of religious philosophy.

One day I attended the Sunday Feast and was amazed to see so many people joyfully jumping and dancing in the temple. I had attended several retreats and faith-healing seminars (known as Charismatic Group) in churches where we also used to raise our arms and pray, but this was extraordinary. Just an amazing experience. While leaving the temple I got more books to read. When my mother saw these "Hindu" books, she became curious and wondered what was happening to me. I pacified her by saying I was interested in yoga and was learning about it.

Soon I started chanting *japa.* To avoid trouble at home, I didn't chant on beads but kept track of the number of mantras on a mechanical counter. I found that *japa* is the best form of personal prayer. I stopped drinking tea and coffee and reduced my intake of nonvegetarian food. My parents became more and more curious about these changes and kept trying to persuade me to drink tea and eat meat. I blamed my lifestyle changes on yoga. Occasionally, I would have to yield to their pressure, but mostly I stood my ground, all the time remaining kind and polite in my dealings with them.

Soon after I had begun chanting regularly, Satish accepted spiritual initiation and received the name Śrī Kiśora Dāsa. He left AurionPro and became a professor at an engineering college. Although I was sad that I would no longer meet him so often, he came to my home regularly, and we would discuss the teachings of the Bible and correlate them with the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā.* I found Vaiṣṇava philosophy to be a progression from Christian theology because it gave more information about the nature of the soul and our relationship with God. My mother was impressed to see Satish, a Hindu boy, taking such an interest in Christian teachings.

Going to church on Sundays is mandatory for everyone in my family, so it was a challenge to also attend the Sunday Feasts and other temple functions without alarming my parents. But somehow I managed. To get encouragement and good guidance, I started to associate more with devotees.

One day Śrī Kiśora informed me that his spiritual master, His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami, was coming to India after his annual trip to the USA. I grabbed the opportunity and decided to attend his morning *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. Mahārāja's personality and lecture had a profound impact on me. He referred extensively to the Bible and quoted from it. The words I had read in the Bible and heard during Gospel readings at church came alive through his explanations and realizations. He exalted Jesus Christ and explained how Jesus preached devotional service to the people.

Revolt Against Family and Friends

At that time I never chanted *japa* at home, but always chanted while I was commuting to work. But this *japa* had little value because the surrounding noise hardly enabled me to focus on the mantra. So I got a bead bag with beads and started to chant eight rounds at home, very softly at night, when everyone was asleep. But inevitably my mother saw me chanting and got upset. She told me I had become a blasphemer and that it was sacrilege to pray to other gods. I pacified her, saying it was just a mantra to help calm the mind. The argument ended, but by now my whole family was aware that I was really into something else. She became angry at Śrī Kiśora, whom she now realized was responsible for my change of faith. She banned him from our home.

In the meantime I took up kitchen service at the temple, soon learning how to cook tasty meals without adding meat, onions, or garlic. Slowly I started chanting sixteen rounds of *japa* and completely stopped eating nonvegetarian food. I also stopped using bad language and going to restaurants that served alcohol and meat. Sundays, which had once been dedicated to cricket and football, now took me to the temple. Some of my childhood friends were sarcastic: "Till yesterday you were eating chicken with us, but now you are acting strangely." But I would remain quiet unless someone questioned my faith. Then I would vigorously defend Kṛṣṇa consciousness with neophyte enthusiasm. This strained my relationships with my friends, and slowly I found myself without their company. But I was making new friends at the temple, and I began to like my new life.

Moving Away from Home

In June 2005 devotees were planning to attend the Rathayātrā in Puri. I wished to attend but did not know how to tell my parents. So I told them I had to attend a training session outside Mumbai, and with this excuse I escaped. When I returned to Mumbai, I was shocked to discover that my beads and other devotional paraphernalia were missing from my home. Somehow my mother had come to know of my pilgrimage and taken the opportunity to seize my belongings.

She took me to the church to meet the parish priest. He asked me to stop going to the temple. I refused. There was no way I could explain to him what I was feeling, and my parents were not going to understand why I was trying to follow an alternative way of life. I decided to leave home and move in with a group of young unmarried devotee men. This helped me solidify my faith, and in their company I began to understand and appreciate the nuances of devotional service.

A fortnight later my mother called to say she had come to terms with my spiritual practices. I should come home, she said. She would even cook vegetarian food for me. I agreed, and after having lived with the devotees for six months, I returned home. Although my mother was true to her word and less aggressive now, both she and my father were extremely watchful of my activities. Then I got a job with IBM and had to move to Bangalore. This was a welcome change as it allowed me to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness freely, without being questioned. I got in touch with the local devotees and began visiting ISKCON's Śrī Jagannātha Mandir regularly.

(*please turn to page 56*)

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***Bhagavad-gītā* 1:**
January 1–March 4 (9 weeks)
Teacher: Śyāmānanda Dāsa

***Bhagavad-gītā* 2:**
March 11–May 6 (8 weeks)
Teacher: Dīnadayāla Dāsa

***Bhagavad-gītā* 3:**
May 13–July 1 (7 weeks)
Teacher: Bhaktavāsa Govinda Dāsa

The Nectar of Devotion:
July 8–September 16 (10 weeks)
Teacher: Sudevī Dāsī

Śrī Īśopaniṣad:
September 23–November 4 (6 weeks)
Teacher: Raghupati Dāsa

The Nectar of Instruction:
November 11–December 23 (6 weeks)
Teacher: Maṅgala Candrikā Dāsī

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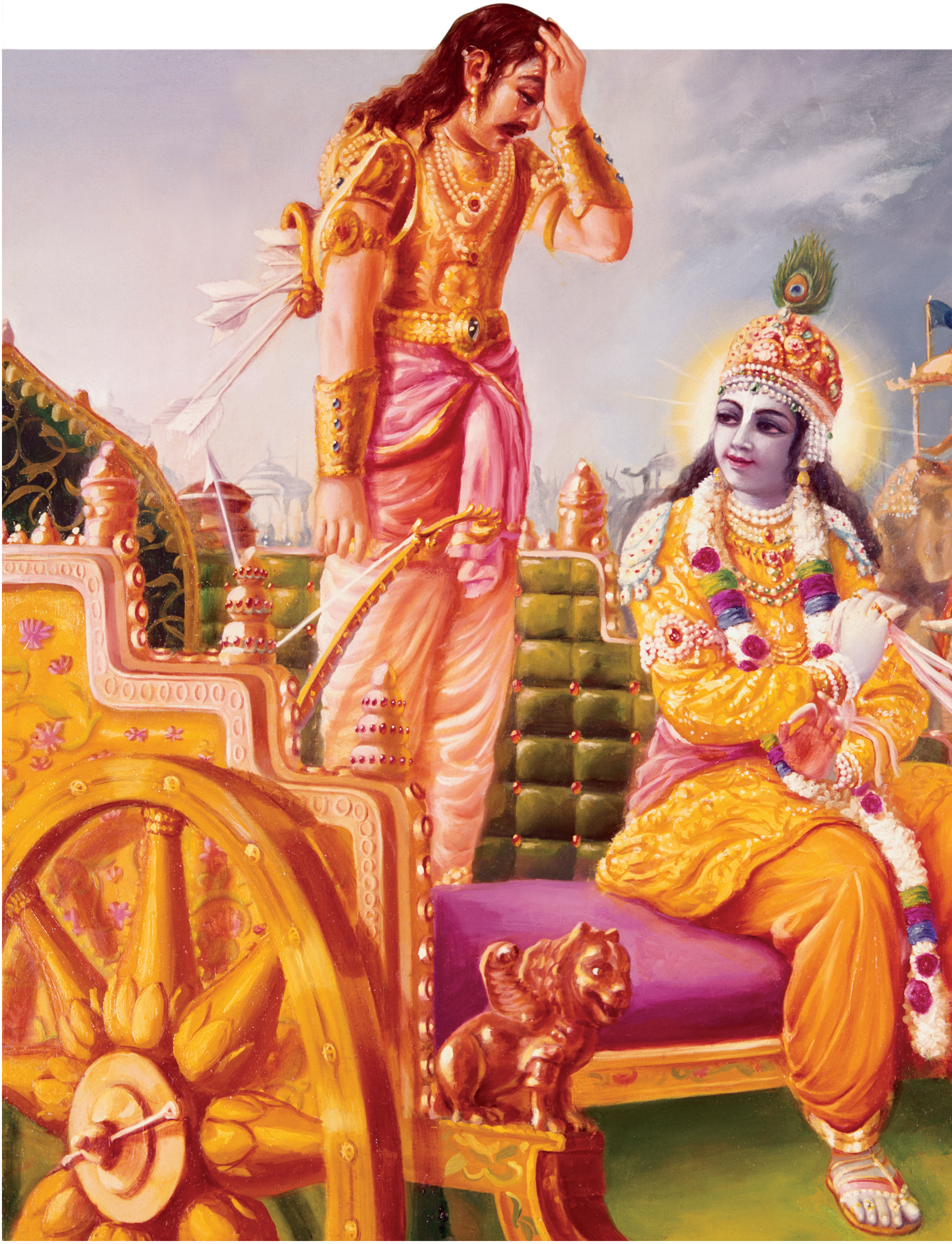
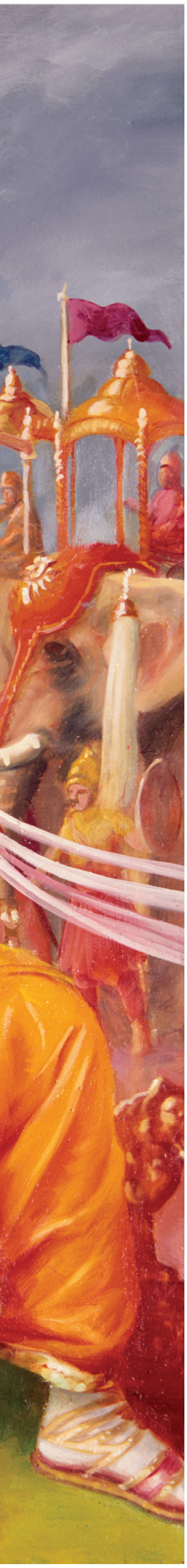


Painting by Bharadvāja Dāsa



FACE TO FACE WITH FRUSTRATION

Not getting what you want? Perhaps that's good for you.

By Murāri Gupta Dāsa

"PLEASE CANCEL my tickets," I said to my friend on the phone. "I won't be able to go."

I hung up the phone and sank down onto my bed, my head in my hands. My friend had arranged my tickets for the trip to Jagannatha Puri and Mayapur I had been so eagerly looking forward to, and now I had to cancel. The past few weeks in my life had been very turbulent, so when my friends proposed a spiritual retreat to these two holy places so dear to the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I jumped at the offer, hoping for a welcome break. But it couldn't happen now. My stringent schedule was not loosening its grip on me.

"Damn it!" I cried out.

I shot from the bed, threw my pillow to the ground, and pulled out the bed sheet. I lifted the mattress and wanted to fling it too, but it was too heavy. I dropped it half on the floor, stomped out of the room, went into the bathroom, and stood with my arms bent over the sink. Breathing heavily, I stared down at the dark drain and dripped tears into it.

Unable to drive my life according to my desires, I was frustrated, angry, and helpless. My mind swirled like a dry leaf caught in a hurricane. I had no one to talk to, no way to sort things out.

Light in the Abyss

I had to come out of this mental mess, so I turned to my old and tested remedy for finding solutions to life's incessant problems: scriptures and devotional talks. As always, I found direction. Teachings from the scriptures gave me a perspective to understand my situation and make peace with it.

Inevitably, all of us will sometimes find ourselves face to face with frustration. Some people advocate venting frustration by going to an empty field and shouting curses or visiting a dump-yard to break the windows of rejected vehicles. You can do that. Or you can choose to ponder over some jewels from the timeless

Lord Kṛṣṇa consoles the dejected Ajruna by showing him how to see everything from a spiritual perspective.

Vedic teachings that may help during turbulent times. Here are my lifelines:

Don't brood: Stop meditating on the problem over and over again.

Unfulfilled desires have a strange habit. Unlike most of the thousand other thoughts that arise in our mind and then vaporize in thin air, unfulfilled desires hover around the mind like a hot-air balloon anchored to the earth. The more we think about them, the more strongly they stay tethered to our consciousness, refusing to leave and creating a vicious cycle. And when you can't satisfy their demands, they bring their buddies—anger and frustration—who are so expert in making you miserable. The *Gītā* (2.62) warns us against such moody musings: "While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises."

So the first solution is to think of something else. Get busy. Don't keep an idle mind ransacked by devilish thoughts.

Wait for the good times: The Eighth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* relates an incident in which the demons (*asuras*) attacked the demigods (*suras*). Although the demigods are the good guys in the cosmic hierarchy and one would expect them to win against the evil forces, in this instance they find themselves no match for the vastly superior demoniac army. Helpless, they approach the Supreme Lord. But instead of helping them win the war, He advises them to declare a truce until time favors them.

Sometimes anything we touch turns to dust. Our projects fail, people misunderstand us, we don't get credit for the good things we do, we get blamed for wrongs others do, our relationships sour, our academic performance plummets, our career crashes. Nothing works. Instead of getting restless during these times, we should remember the Lord's instruction to the demigods and declare a truce with life until time favors us.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.14) Lord Kṛṣṇa points out the impermanence of good and bad times and emphasizes the quality of tolerance: "O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed."

As the proverb says, "This too shall pass."

Persevere: Patiently tolerating adverse times does not mean we should give up our efforts. Śrīla Prabhupāda brilliantly exemplifies the quality of perseverance in times of frustration. Desiring to build the first Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in New York City, he solicited help from influential godbrothers, pious Indian business magnates, and the government of India, but no one helped him. He was seventy, with modest means, few contacts in America, and only a handful of followers, yet he did not give up. Within a decade, his perseverance saw the emergence of not just one Kṛṣṇa temple, but more than a hundred temples worldwide.

Remember that Kṛṣṇa might have a higher plan: Sometimes the efforts we put into a project might not fetch us the expected returns. But then Lord Kṛṣṇa may reward us somewhere else. A few years back I was part of a group of devotees distributing sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in factories. We were working hard in the capital of an Indian state, trying to meet VIPs, political leaders, police chiefs, and so on, with the hope of getting large orders of books. But nothing seemed to work out. I remember walking into eighteen companies in a day and getting no's everywhere.

Later, I stayed in the area to coordinate book distribution while my senior colleague went to another area. And—whoa! The new area turned out to be a goldmine. He met a highly placed person who arranged for us to visit many top companies, and we distributed hundreds of book sets.

Be detached: While randomly opening the pages of *Bhagavad-gītā,* I came across text 9.7, where the Lord says, "O son of Kuntī, at the end of the millennium all material manifestations enter into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency, I create them again."

I pondered, "Within this unlimitedly vast creation and unlimited stretch of time, where do I and my tiny problem stand?"

I heaved a sigh of relief.

Be assured that Kṛṣṇa knows best: Lord Kṛṣṇa is like the affectionate father who gives us what we need, not what we want. Often something we ask for could be harmful for us, so God does not give it. Or by denying us what we want, He may be giving us a chance to grow internally. He knows what is best for us. And He is the controller, not us. It's prudent to be patient and keep faith in His good judgment.

Accept the situation with humility: In a lecture, my spiritual master, His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami Mahārāja, explained how to accept frustrating situations with humility:

I pondered, "Within this unlimitedly vast creation and unlimited stretch of time, where do I and my tiny problem stand?"

One of the greatest illusions is the pride that we deserve what we want. Humility means thinking, "I deserve nothing. I deserve the worst. Whatever I get is better than what I deserve." A humble person is grateful for whatever he gets. If good comes, with folded palms we say, "Thank You, Kṛṣṇa; You are so kind. You are a loving father." If suffering comes into our lives, with tears in the heart we will say, "Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind; I deserve so much worse. This is just what I require for my purification."

The egoistic person always thinks, "I deserve better." But the humble person thinks everything is the causeless mercy of the Lord. If you are grateful to Kṛṣṇa and you are reciprocating with loving feeling with Kṛṣṇa in every circumstance of your life, you will never be disturbed. That is humility. The one qualification that makes us eligible for joy and peace in the state of liberation is to expect nothing, knowing we deserve nothing. Therefore with gracious heart we thank Lord Kṛṣṇa for everything that comes. Lord Caitanya prays in the *Śikṣāṣṭakam,* "My Lord, if You want You can embrace me; if You want You can make me brokenhearted by not being present before me; if You want You can trample upon me. I am Your servant, and You have every right to deal with me in any way You please."

If you can become humble, you will be peaceful; you will be joyful and full of bliss twenty-four hours of the day, because happiness is not what we have or get—happiness is the disposition of the heart.

A Continuous Challenge

Although I have compiled this list, I must say I still find keeping sane in the face of frustration a continuous challenge. But the foundation of spiritual teachings in my life helps me face the hurricanes. In this regard, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teaches us a wonderful lesson through the life of a *brāhmaṇa* from Avanti. Formerly a multi-millionaire, he lost all his wealth and was subsequently shunned by his family and friends. People treated him brutally, yet he found solace in taking shelter of God. In a stanza of a song he composed, he spoke about his realizations: "These people are not the cause of my happiness and distress. Neither are the demigods, my own body, the planets, my past work, or time. Rather, it is the mind alone that causes happiness and distress and perpetuates the rotation of material life." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.23.42)

A materially attached mind is a source of suffering, but a mind focused on transcendence, fixed on Kṛṣṇa, is always in a state of happiness (*ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam*). Happiness comes as a by-product of love of Kṛṣṇa. The prime benediction for all humanity is the chanting of the Lord's holy names. There is no other way in this age to purify our mind, to make it our best friend. When the mind is purified, then the heart blossoms like a lotus. We see Lord Kṛṣṇa everywhere, and we see His love in everything and everyone. We should aspire to be in such a spiritual state of consciousness.

Murāri Gupta Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami, has a bachelor's degree in medicine and surgery (M.B.B.S.) and is part of the production team of the English edition of Back to Godhead *in India.*

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HARE KṚṢṆA PEOPLE

Delivering Little Souls

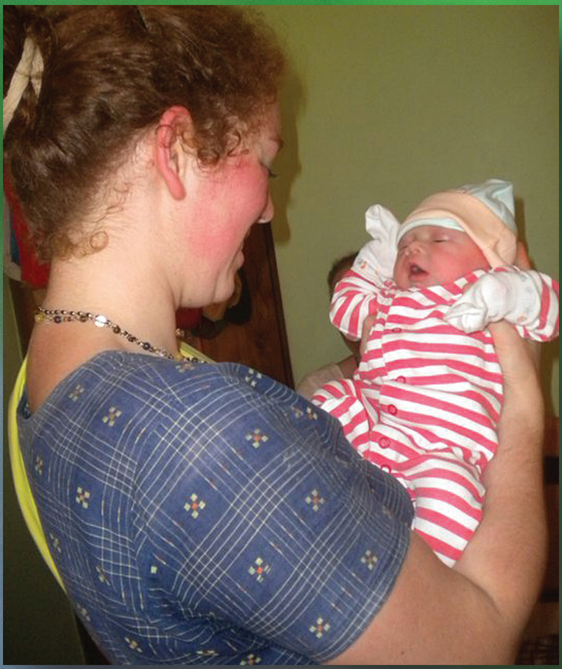
A young devotee finds joy and spiritual realization as she pursues a career as a midwife.

By Madhava Smullen

TULASI HARRISON was only seven years old—still practically a baby herself—when she decided she wanted to become a midwife and help bring new life into the world. Tulasi grew up in the ISKCON community at Bhaktivedanta Manor in England, daughter of priest and congregational preacher Kṛpāmoya Dāsa and *gurukula* teacher Guru Caraṇa Padmā Dāsī. Her little brother Mali was fortunate enough to be delivered by a devotee midwife, her mother's friend Ramādevī.

As she came to say hello to Mali after the birth, Tulasi looked up at Ramādevī in awe.

"I thought it was just so amazing



Tulasi Harrison holds Malini, the first baby she delivered, in the householder compound of ISKCON Mayapur.

that someone who was both your friend and a devotee could deliver your baby," says Tulasi, now twenty-one.

Inspired, Tulasi kept the thought in her mind over the years. She considered other caring jobs such as nurse or teacher, but when she got to college at eighteen, everything fell into place for her to become a midwife.

With her chosen goal—a Bachelor of Science degree at London's City University—Tulasi was in for a busy, challenging, and rewarding three years. She explains that in the UK, the role of midwife is a very prestigious, highly skilled, and well-paid government job. Although capable of doing natural home births, midwives in the UK, unlike those in the US, generally work at hospitals alongside the doctor and are present throughout all births, as advocates for the mother.

To learn such a specialized skill, Tulasi spent forty percent of her time at her university learning theory and academic knowledge, and sixty per cent at the University College Hospital in the heart of London, getting practical training and experience.

Her hectic schedule, whizzing back and forth between both locations every few weeks, was a

challenge to her still developing commitment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness—but Tulasi was determined to do her best at balancing the two.

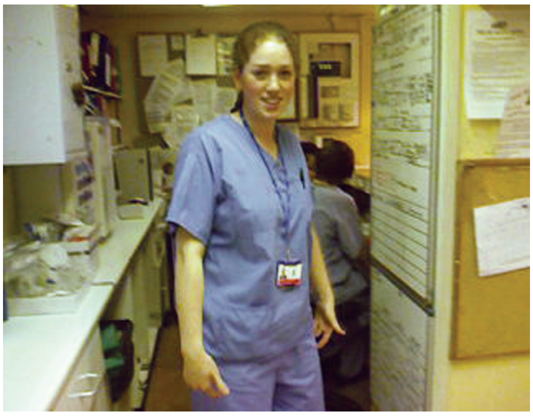
Balancing Work And Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

"On days when I was at the hospital, I would have to leave home at 6:45 A.M., start work at 8:00 A.M., and, depending on my shift, stay until 8:30 P.M. or even later," Tulasi says. "A few times when it was too late to go home safely, I even had to spend the night at the hospital."

Tulasi is honest about what a struggle it was for her to fit *sādhana*, regulated spiritual practices, into her day.

"It's tough to fit chanting *japa* in, what to speak of the morning program at the temple, when you're doing a twelve- or fourteen-hour shift," she says. "Sometimes I would get up at the latest time I could, because I was just so tired. The stressful and emotionally draining nature of the job made it even more difficult."

Still, Tulasi's outlook was to see her Kṛṣṇa conscious practices as a source of strength, rather than as a burden. During the twenty-minute walk from her train station to the hospital in the morning, she would chant on her beads. And at the hospital, she searched for and found a quiet, peaceful prayer room, where she would chant during her one-hour lunch break.



Tulasi's first inspiration to become a midwife came at age seven when Ramādevī delivered Tulasi's brother Mali (left). Above: Tulasi in scrubs at the hospital in England where she works.

Meanwhile, Tulasi protected herself from the student lifestyle of drinking and clubbing by living at home with her family rather than on campus, by choosing the right association, and by keeping herself busy with Kṛṣṇa conscious activities in the little spare time she had.

"Support systems are very important," she says. "For me, my sister, Jahnavi, is one of my biggest inspirations, and when she was there I felt safe. Having a lot of devotee friends, especially ones who had similar challenges to mine, was also very helpful. I got on well with the people in my course, but the bond I have with devotee friends is so much deeper, because they understand so much more about my life and faith."

On the weekends, Tulasi would do service at the temple, have *bhajanas* with other *gurukulis,* perform dramas at temple festivals, volunteer with the Pandava Sena youth group, and take classes in Bharat-Natyam dance. Then she would dive right back into her course during the week.

"I don't think I got much sleep!" She laughs.

Understanding That Kṛṣṇa Is in Control

While she trained to become a midwife, Tulasi delivered four more than the required forty babies, and participated on some level in hundreds more births—at the post-natal ward in the University College Hospital's delivery suite, at the birthing center, and at special pools for pool births.

"I started off just observing and helping a senior midwife," Tulasi says. "Then I put my hands on hers while she was delivering the babies. Finally, as I became more experienced, I started doing the deliveries and all the paperwork afterwards myself."

According to Tulasi, the work required a strong stomach—new students often fainted at the sight of blood—but she thrived in such a challenging environment. Her Kṛṣṇa conscious upbringing helped her to understand things at a deeper level than most, while the setting was also ripe for spiritual realizations.

One of the greatest realizations

for Tulasi in her training was that while she could do her best and put all her medical skills to use, at the end of the day everything was under Kṛṣṇa's control, not hers. So when something wasn't going right, she simply surrendered and prayed to Him to help the mother and child, which often yielded amazing results.

"Once the umbilical cord had wrapped around a baby's neck, and it was so tight that her face was white—a very bad sign," Tulasi says. "I knew that it was dangerous to cut the cord before the baby came out, because she could get stuck inside, but it was also the only way to save her. So I prayed to Kṛṣṇa, and then made the difficult decision to cut the cord. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, she came out, I rushed her off to the doctors, and she was fine."

Of course, things didn't always go well. Sometimes there were miscarriages, or still-births. But when tragedy struck, understanding that it was the will of God helped Tulasi to be there for the family, as well as to deal with doubts about whether she could have done something more to prevent it.

"Atheists have told me that they don't need religion, and that it's just a crutch for people to lean on," Tulasi says. "But I say yes, it is a crutch, and what's wrong with that? It's not that atheists are strong and we are weak. It's that we understand that we're weak, as human beings with material bodies. And we need Kṛṣṇa as a source of strength in difficult times."

Tulasi felt a deep connection with patients who were also God conscious and had the same understanding, while other mothers would notice that she had a special quality about her.

"Wow, you're so calm," they would say. "Whenever you come into the room, I just feel peaceful." Some requested her specifically, saying, "We like the way she is."

In helping couples through the often difficult experience of giving birth, and providing emotional support for them through all kinds of complications and situations, Tulasi found that she formed strong bonds with them in short periods of time.

"As a midwife, you have to be strong for both parents when they're scared and worried," she says. "You have to put them at ease, so that they feel completely comfortable with you. You become like their best friend. By the time the birth has happened, they love you so much. And then it's time to say goodbye. You just have to end the relationship right there. It can be difficult."

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The Gift of a Lifetime

Before a new family went home, however, Tulasi would make sure she always chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in the newborn baby's ear while weighing it or doing some other task.

"I didn't know what kind of life they were going to have, but I just wanted them to have heard Kṛṣṇa's name, and hopefully to remember it at some point in the future," she says. "It's just a gift I wanted to pass on to every baby before they embarked on the journey of life."

Tulasi also gave the gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the adult patients and hospital staff. Since she was very popular at the hospital because of her caring, bright, and happy nature, which she attributes to her Kṛṣṇa conscious upbringing, people would ask her why she was always so happy, or where she got her unusual name. When she told them she was a Hare Kṛṣṇa, their reaction would often be surprise.

"Working as a midwife is an excellent opportunity for me to tell people about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and clear up any misconceptions they may have had about it," she says. "I found myself having long conversations about the philosophy with mothers, other midwives, and even doctors, explaining to them what it is that makes me so happy and peaceful."

"You Have the Highest Service"

In December 2010, after completing her midwifery course, Tulasi opted to take some time out before getting a job in her chosen career. She decided to spend it taking a three-month course for a Bhakti-Śāstri degree in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in the holy *dhāma* of Mayapur, India.

"For those of us who grew up in a devotee family, the philosophy is ingrained in us, but often it's at the level we learned as kids in *gurukula,* and we don't study more as adults," she says. "At least I didn't," she adds with her trademark honesty. "So I wanted to balance my education as a midwife with a stronger knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Kṛṣṇa seemed to reciprocate by giving Tulasi a chance to directly connect her career to Him. For it was while in the holy *dhāma* that she assisted in her first ever devotee birth.

"I discovered that Ramādevī, who first inspired me to be a midwife, was living in Mayapur and doing midwifery there," she says. "And I got a chance to assist her in a birth. It was just an amazing experience—it was my first birth since qualifying as a midwife, my first devotee birth, my first birth in a holy place, and my first birth assisting my original inspiration, Ramādevī."

For Tulasi, delivering a baby at someone's house in Mayapur was an entirely new experience. She had never done a home birth before, and the nearest hospital was half an hour away, with a car waiting to rush there in case of complications. What's more, there was less equipment than was available at home births back in England. And there were no doctors to help in case of an emergency.

"Ramādevī and I were completely on our own, and I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, this is so much responsibility—if anything happens to this baby, it's all my fault,'" Tulasi says. "We had to formulate our plan in case of an emergency, and then just rely on Kṛṣṇa."

This faith in the Lord was the one thing everyone had plenty more of in Mayapur than back in England, and it guided them through the task.

"At one point, as we were really struggling, Ramādevī looked up at the couple's Jagannātha deities," says Tulasi. "She said, 'We all have to pray to Lord Baladeva, who is the force of gravity, to help us pull this baby out, just as he once pulled the Yamuna River to Him.' We all prayed, and immediately the contractions became stronger, and the baby started coming out. It was amazing."

At that moment, Tulasi remembered what ISKCON Mayapur's head priest Jananivāsa Dāsa had once told Ramādevī: "You have the highest service, because you get to touch the feet of the *dhāma-vāsīs* [residents of a holy place] before they even touch the ground."

These words running through her head, Tulasi placed the baby's feet on her head, and then handed her gently to her mother.

I remember thinking, "Oh my God, this is so much responsibility—if anything happens to this baby, it's all my fault."

All the while, a recording of Prabhupāda singing *kīrtana* played in the background, and everyone present chanted the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Ramādevī told everyone, "There's nothing more special than delivering a devotee into this world to the sound of *kīrtana,* with Prabhupāda singing and devotees surrounding the child."

"We all got quite choked up at that," Tulasi recalls. "It was such a wonderful thought. The birth of a devotee is an addition to our big, worldwide family, and is always such a special, heartfelt moment. And this one certainly was. It was such a celebration! Throughout the labor, the father had been cooking a huge *prasāda* feast, and many devotees gathered to honor it and to give the new baby their blessings."

The Future

After spending six months in Mayapur, Tulasi returned to England, where she is now applying for a job. Her stay in Mayapur has renewed her determination to make Kṛṣṇa the center of her life.

"For me, besides chanting and attending the temple morning program more, that means taking steps to arrange my work to bring me closer to Kṛṣṇa by serving His devotees," she says. "So I've applied for a job at Watford General, the hospital near Bhaktivedanta Manor where my brother was born, and where many other devotee babies continue to be born."

In the future, Tulasi hopes to return to India to help Ramādevī deliver babies in Mayapur and the surrounding villages. There, she may co-author a book with Rādhā-Sundarī Dāsī about Vaiṣṇava mothers and their experiences of giving birth and raising their children. She also plans to study *saṁskāras* (traditional Vedic or Vaiṣṇava rites, which Rādhā-Sundarī Dāsī teaches), as well as Ayurveda and other Vedic sources regarding pregnancy and birth, so that she can provide a more spiritual, holistic alternative to modern advice on childbearing.

Finally, setting up her own clinic is a long-term future goal for Tulasi.

"I'd like it to be a place where devotees can come and have a more Kṛṣṇa conscious experience, and feel completely comfortable," she says. "I'm looking forward to it. This is such a sweet, rewarding service to have."

Madhava Smullen, raised in a devotee family, writes for news.iskcon.com. This article was originally published there, and he expanded it for BTG. Other articles about devotees are posted weekly on news.iskcon.com. Madhava lives in Alachua, Florida, and in October married Manjari Gauthier, also from a family of devotees.

Revolutionize Your Heart And Revolutionize the World

If we become qualified, we can have a powerful effect on world history.

By Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa

Yamarāja Dāsa

THE MOST exciting and enlightening life one can possibly experience in Kali-yuga, the current age, is a life dedicated to pushing forward the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for the benefit of all the suffering, bewildered souls of this age. By accepting the task of freeing the world from anxiety, the devoted propagator of Kṛṣṇa consciousness lives a life free from anxiety. Because of his selfless life of service dedicated to the welfare of all living beings, he is described as being an ocean of mercy and as one who suffers to see the suffering of others.

Just as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is revolutionary because it is meant to bring about a spiritual revolution on this planet, the lives of those who propagate the culture of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are also revolutionary. These transcendental revolutionaries are situated on the cutting edge of world history. Their daily activities of pushing forward the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are the most significant events in history. They are having the biggest impact on world history by their daily activities of deeply imbibing and mercifully broadcasting the transcendental name, fame, forms, qualities, and pastimes of the all-powerful, all-beautiful, all-renounced, all-knowledgeable, all-wealthy, and all-famous Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These spiritual revolutionaries are the vanguard of the *prema* tsunami, the tidal wave of love of God that has already begun to inundate the world in fulfillment of the prediction of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī: "The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will inundate the entire world and drown everyone, whether one be a gentleman, a rogue, or even lame, invalid, or blind." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.26)

When one humbly accepts this revolutionary mission as his life and soul, on the order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the spiritual masters in His line, he must remember that he can be successful in having an uplifting impact on this universe only to the extent that he has revolutionized or uplifted his own heart. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura compares a Vaiṣṇava to a touchstone, which can turn iron into gold. The more Kṛṣṇa conscious one is, the more one can inspire the nondevotees to take to the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda says that the devotee who is completely offenseless in his chanting becomes *jagad-guru* and influences the entire world to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*

Becoming Offenseless Chanters

Therefore even more important than the endeavor to save the world is to save ourselves by becoming offenseless chanters of the Lord's holy names. That means to avoid the ten kinds of offenses against the holy names, which are given as follows in the Vedic scriptures:

The first offense is to be critical of those who have dedicated their lives to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Such devotees are always to be loved and respected, even if we sometimes have a difference of opinion with them. Kṛṣṇa says that unless we are the devotees of His devotees, then we are not His devotees. Therefore in all conditions we must remain the devotees of His devotees.

The second offense is think that chanting the names of the demigods is on the same level with chanting the name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. We must always remember that Kṛṣṇa is not one of the gods. Rather He is the God of the gods.

The third offense is to disobey the order the spiritual master. One who is serious to awaken his Kṛṣṇa consciousness must take shelter of and become initiated by a bona fide spiritual master and accept the spiritual master's orders as his very life and soul.

The fourth offense is to blaspheme the Vedic literature or any literature written in pursuance of the Vedic version. Any literature that glorifies the Supreme Personality of Godhead in an authorized way is not of this world. It is transcendental and will deliver its readers to the spiritual world. We must always maintain veneration and respect for all such literature.

The fifth offense is to consider

the glories of the holy name an exaggeration. The holy name, being Kṛṣṇa Himself, is fully empowered with all the unlimited potencies and glories of the Lord. Even one pure utterance of Kṛṣṇa's name can destroy the reactions for sinful activities performed over millions and billions of lifetimes. This is the inconceivable power of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name.

The sixth offense is to concoct perverted theories about the holy name. We should simply understand Kṛṣṇa and His name according to the version of the saintly teachers, the spiritual master, and the Vedic wisdom.

The holy name, being Kṛṣṇa Himself, is fully empowered with all the unlimited potencies and glories of the Lord.

The seventh offense is to intentionally commit sinful activities with the idea that it is okay to sin and then neutralize that sin by chanting.

The eighth offense is the chant the holy names for some material purpose, like getting a new job or a new car, or winning a lottery.

The ninth offense is to instruct an unwilling audience about the transcendental glories or spiritual significance of the holy name. We should first give them the opportunity to become purified by hearing the sweet chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names. Then we can instruct them in the science of the holy name.

The tenth offense is to not be interested even after hearing of the transcendental nature of the holy name. In other words, we must develop genuine taste for Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Otherwise we are offenders against the name.

Those who want to become empowered to push forward the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must become expert in avoiding all of these offenses, because we become empowered to liberate the world only to the extent that we are liberated.

Convince with Our Conviction

If we want to convince others of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we must be thoroughly convinced ourselves. If we are still doubtful ourselves, how will we convince others? In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda told his disciples in Vrindavan on November 7, 1976:

> God is all-powerful, but when we hear that God at the age of seven years lifted Govardhan Hill, immediately we dismiss: "Oh, this is all mythology." Why? If He has inconceivable power—He is all-powerful—is it very difficult for Him to lift Govardhan Hill? "No, we don't believe in God. Even if we believe, we want to believe in our own way that is *bhāvyam,* conceivable." But He is *durvibhāvyam.* You cannot conceive.

We have to remember that Kṛṣṇa's glories are far, far beyond the limits of our conceptual powers. We have to connect with His inconceivable qualities through love, and then when we become qualified with full conviction, we will able to see Him at every minute. The more we are convinced, the more we will be empowered to convince others. Conviction is contagious. If someone is absolutely convinced that Kṛṣṇa is God, he can convince the entire world. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the best example of this. If we took a survey in New York City asking people if they believe in God, many would say yes. But if we told them that God is a little blue cowherd boy who wears a yellow silk *dhoti* and a peacock feather in His hair, and who stands on the bank of the river Yamuna in the moonlit night, attracting the *gopīs* to come and associate with Him by playing His flute, many people would think we are crazy. How did Śrīla Prabhupāda convince so many thousands of American boys and girls that Kṛṣṇa is God? His conviction convinced them. Such conviction comes through loving service to Kṛṣṇa, not through mental gymnastics.

Two Fields to Purify

Our field of action is twofold: within and without. We have to purify our inner vision by loving service to the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees. And then we have to purify the vision of the world population by educating them in the science of Kṛṣṇa. In regard to these realms of action, Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.9: "Therefore we should pray to Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva to sit in our hearts. We should pray, *bahir nṛsiṁho hṛdaye nṛsiṁhaḥ:* 'Let Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva sit in the core of my heart, killing all my bad propensities. Let my mind become clean so that I may peacefully worship the Lord and bring peace to the entire world.'"

We pray to become fully Nṛsiṁhadeva-ized within our hearts, and we pray that the entire world can become Nṛsiṁhadeva-ized. This is the meditation of a person fully dedicated to inundating the world with Kṛṣṇa *bhakti.* The spiritual revolution begins within one's own heart. If one wants to inundate the world with *bhakti,* he must first inundate his own heart with *bhakti.* One must develop a mood of complete humility, realizing one's utter incompetence to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, while at the same time enthusiastically endeavor to do so for the pleasure of guru and Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the proper mood one should have while endeavoring to be a spiritual revolutionary:

> The author of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, very humbly submits that he is just trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness

(*please turn to page 56*)

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

THE REMOTE CAUSE OF EVERYTHING

While trying to console Dhruva Mahārāja, who is lamenting over his brother's death, Svāyambhuva Manu provides philosophical insight into the nature of causality.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 11

15 भूतैः पञ्चभिरारब्धैर्योषित्पुरुष एव हि
तयोर्व्यवायात्सम्भूतिर्योषित्पुरुषयोरिह

bhūtaiḥ pañcabhir ārabdhair
yoṣit puruṣa eva hi
tayor vyavāyāt sambhūtir
yoṣit-puruṣayor iha

bhūtaiḥ—by the material elements; *pañcabhiḥ*—five; *ārabdhaiḥ*—developed; *yoṣit*—woman; *puruṣaḥ*—man; *eva*—just so; *hi*—certainly; *tayoḥ*—of them; *vyavāyāt*—by sexual life; *sambhūtiḥ*—the further creation; *yoṣit*—of women; *puruṣayoḥ*—and of men; *iha*—in this material world.

The creation of the material world begins with the five elements, and thus everything, including the body of a man or a woman, is created of these elements. By the sexual life of man and woman, the number of men and women in this material world is further increased.

PURPORT: When Svāyambhuva Manu saw that Dhruva Mahārāja understood the philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism and yet was still dissatisfied because of his brother's death, he gave him an explanation of how this material body is created by the five elements of material nature. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is also confirmed, *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni:* everything is created, maintained, and annihilated by the material modes of nature. In the background, of course, there is the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (*mayādhyakṣeṇa*). In the Ninth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa says, "Under My superintendence material nature is acting." ① Svāyambhuva Manu wanted to impress on Dhruva Mahārāja that the death of the material body of his brother was not actually the Yakṣas' fault; it was an act of the material nature.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has immense varieties of potencies, and they act in different gross and subtle ways. It is by such powerful potencies that the universe is created, although grossly it appears to be no more than the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Similarly, the bodies of all species of living entities, whether human beings or demigods, animals, or birds, are also created by the same five elements, and by sexual union they expand into more and more living entities. That is the way of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. One should not

(1) How was Svāyambhuva Manu trying to impress on Dhruva Mahārāja that his brother's death was not the Yakṣas' fault?

be disturbed by the waves of material nature in this process. ② Dhruva Mahārāja was indirectly advised not to be afflicted by the death of his brother because our relationship with the body is completely material. The real self, spirit soul, is never annihilated or killed by anyone.

16 एवं प्रवर्तते सर्गः स्थितिः संयम एव च
गुणव्यतिकराद्राजन् मायया परमात्मनः

evaṁ pravartate sargaḥ
sthitiḥ saṁyama eva ca
guṇa-vyatikarād rājan
māyayā paramātmanaḥ

evam—thus; *pravartate*—occurs; *sargaḥ*—creation; *sthitiḥ*—maintenance; *saṁyamaḥ*—annihilation; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *guṇa*—of the modes; *vyatikarāt*—by interaction; *rājan*—O King; *māyayā*—by the illusory energy; *parama-ātmanaḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Manu continued: My dear King Dhruva, it is simply by the illusory, material energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by the interaction of the three modes of material nature that creation, maintenance, and annihilation take place.

PURPORT: First, creation takes place with the ingredients of the five elements of material nature. Then, by the interaction of the modes of material nature, maintenance also takes place. When a child is born, the parents immediately see to its maintenance. This tendency for maintenance of offspring is present not only in human society, but in animal society as well. Even tigers care for their cubs, although their propensity is to eat other animals. By the interaction of the material modes of nature, creation, maintenance, and also annihilation take place inevitably. But at the same time we should know that all is conducted under the superintendence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Everything is going on under that process. ③ Creation is the action of the *rajo-guṇa,* the mode of passion; maintenance is the action of *sattva-guṇa,* the mode of goodness; and annihilation is the action of *tamo-guṇa,* the mode of ignorance. ④ We can see that those who are situated in the mode of goodness live longer than those who are situated in the *tamo-guṇa* or *rajo-guṇa.* In other words, if one is elevated to the mode of goodness, he is elevated to a higher planetary system, where the duration of life is very great. *Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthāḥ:* great *ṛṣis,* sages, and *sannyāsīs* who maintain themselves in *sattva-guṇa,* or the mode of material goodness, are elevated to a higher planetary system. Those who are transcendental even to the material modes of nature are situated in the mode of pure goodness; they attain eternal life in the spiritual world.

(2) How was Dhruva Mahārāja indirectly advised not to be afflicted by his brother's death?
(3) Which particular *guṇa* controls creation, maintenance, and annihilation, respectively?
(4) Which *guṇa* is most conducive to a long life?
(5) How does the analogy of the pot and the potter explain Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the material creation?

17 निमित्तमात्रं तत्रासीन्निर्गुणः पुरुषर्षभः
व्यक्ताव्यक्तमिदं विश्वं यत्र भ्रमति लोहवत्

nimitta-mātraṁ tatrāsīn
nirguṇaḥ puruṣarṣabhaḥ
vyaktāvyaktam idaṁ viśvaṁ
yatra bhramati lohavat

nimitta-mātram—remote cause; *tatra*—then; *āsīt*—was; *nirguṇaḥ*—uncontaminated; *puruṣa-ṛṣabhaḥ*—the Supreme Person; *vyakta*—manifested; *avyaktam*—unmanifested; *idam*—this; *viśvam*—world; *yatra*—where; *bhramati*—moves; *loha-vat*—like iron.

My dear Dhruva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is uncontaminated by the material modes of nature. He is the remote cause of the creation of this material cosmic manifestation. When He gives the impetus, many other causes and effects are produced, and thus the whole universe moves, just as iron moves by the integrated force of a magnet.

PURPORT: How the external energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead works within this material world is explained in this verse. Everything is happening by the energy of the Supreme Lord. The atheistic philosophers, who do not agree to accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the original cause of creation, think that the material world moves by the action and reaction of different material elements. A simple example of the interaction of elements occurs when we mix soda and acid and the movement of effervescence is produced. But one cannot produce life by such interaction of chemicals. There are 8,400,000 different species of life, with different wishes and different actions. How the material force is working cannot be explained just on the basis of chemical reaction. A suitable example in this connection is that of the potter and the potter's wheel. The potter's wheel rotates, and several varieties of earthen pots come out. There are many causes for the earthen pots, but the original cause is the potter, who sets a force on the wheel. That force comes by his superintendence. The same idea is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*—behind all material action and reaction there is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa says that everything depends on His energy, and yet He is not everywhere. ⑤ The pot is produced under certain conditions of action and reaction of material energy, but the potter is not in the pot. In a similar way, the material creation is set up by the Lord, but He remains aloof. As stated in the *Vedas,* He simply glanced over it, and the agitation of matter immediately began.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is also said that the Lord impregnates the material energy with the part-and-parcel *jīvas,* and thus the different forms and different activities immediately ensue. ⑥ Because of the different desires and karmic activities of the *jīva* soul, different types of bodies in different species are produced. In Darwin's theory there is no acceptance of the living entity as spirit soul, and therefore his explanation of evolution is incomplete. ⑦ Varieties of phenomena occur within this universe on account of the actions and reactions of the three material modes, but the original creator, or the cause, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is mentioned here as *nimitta-mātram,* the remote cause. He simply pushes the wheel with His energy.

According to the Māyāvādī philosophers, the Supreme Brahman has transformed Himself into many varieties of forms, but that is not the fact. ⑧ He is always transcendental to the actions and reactions of the material *guṇas,* although He is the cause of all causes. Lord Brahmā says, therefore, in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1):

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

There are many causes and effects, but the original cause is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

18 स खल्विदं भगवान् कालशक्त्या
गुणप्रवाहेण विभक्तवीर्यः
करोत्यकर्तैव निहन्त्यहन्ता
चेष्टा विभूम्नः खलु दुर्विभाव्या

sa khalv idaṁ bhagavān kāla-śaktyā
guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ
karoty akartaiva nihanty ahantā
ceṣṭā vibhūmnaḥ khalu durvibhāvyā

saḥ—the; *khalu*—however; *idam*—this (universe); *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kāla*—of time; *śaktyā*—by the force; *guṇa-pravāheṇa*—by the interaction of the modes of nature; *vibhakta*—divided; *vīryaḥ*—(whose) potencies; *karoti*—acts upon; *akartā*—the nondoer; *eva*—although; *nihanti*—kills; *ahantā*—nonkiller; *ceṣṭā*—the energy; *vibhūmnaḥ*—of the Lord; *khalu*—certainly; *durvibhāvyā*—inconceivable.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, by His inconceivable supreme energy, time, causes the interaction of the three modes of material nature, and thus varieties of energy become manifest. It appears that He is acting, but He is not the actor. He is killing, but He is not the killer. Thus it is understood that only by His inconceivable power is everything happening.

PURPORT: The word *durvibhāvyā* means "inconceivable by our tiny brain," and *vibhakta-vīryaḥ* means "divided in varieties of potencies." This is the right explanation of the display of creative energies in the material world. ⑨ We can better understand the mercy of God by an example: a government state is always supposed to be merciful, but sometimes, in order to keep law and order, the government employs its police force, and thus punishment is meted out to the rebellious citizens. Similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always merciful and full of transcendental qualities, but certain individual souls have forgotten their relationship with Kṛṣṇa and have endeavored to lord it over material nature. As a result of their endeavor, they are involved in varieties of material interaction. It is incorrect to argue, however, that because energy issues from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is the actor. In the previous verse, the word *nimitta-mātram* indicates that the Supreme Lord is completely aloof from the action and reaction of this material world. How is everything being done? The word "inconceivable" has been used. It is not within the power of one's small brain to comprehend; unless one accepts the inconceivable power and energy of the Lord, one cannot make any progress. The forces which act are certainly set up by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He is always aloof from their action and reaction. The varieties of energies produced by the interaction of material nature produce the varieties of species of life and their resultant happiness and unhappiness.

How the Lord acts is nicely explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa:* fire is situated in one place, while the heat and light produced by the fire act in many different ways. ⑩ Another example given is that the electric powerhouse is situated in one place, but by its energies many different types of machinery move. The production is never

(6) Why does the creation contain different types of bodies in different species?
(7) Why is Kṛṣṇa called *nimitta-mātram,* the remote cause?
(8) Why is the Māyāvādī philosophers' idea that the Supreme Brahman has transformed Himself into many varieties of forms incorrect?
(9) How is God's mercy like the acts of a government?
(10) How does the example of the electric powerhouse explain Lord Caitanya's philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*?

identical with the original source of the energy, but the original source of energy, being the prime factor, is simultaneously one with and different from the product. Therefore, Lord Caitanya's philosophy, *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* [the simultaneous identity and difference of God and His energy], is the perfect way of understanding.

In this material world, the Lord incarnates in three forms—as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva—by which He takes charge of the three modes of material nature. By His incarnation of Brahmā He creates, as the incarnation of Viṣṇu He maintains, and by His incarnation of Śiva, He also annihilates. ⑪ But the original source of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva—Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu—is always apart from these actions and reactions of material nature.

19 सोऽनन्तोऽन्तकरः कालोऽनादिरादिकृदव्ययः
जनं जनेन जनयन्मारयन्मृत्युनान्तकम्

so 'nanto 'nta-karaḥ kālo
'nādir ādi-kṛd avyayaḥ
janaṁ janena janayan
mārayan mṛtyunāntakam

saḥ—He; *anantaḥ*—infinite; *anta-karaḥ*—annihilator; *kālaḥ*—time; *anādiḥ*—without beginning; *ādi-kṛt*—beginning of everything; *avyayaḥ*—without decrease; *janam*—living entities; *janena*—by living entities; *janayan*—causing to be born; *mārayan*—killing; *mṛtyunā*—by death; *antakam*—killers.

My dear Dhruva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is ever existing, but in the form of time, He is the killer of everything. He has no beginning, although He is the beginning of everything, nor is He ever exhaustible, although everything is exhausted in due course of time. The living entities are created through the agency of the father and killed through the agency of death, but He is perpetually free of birth and death.

PURPORT: The supreme authority and inconceivable power of the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be minutely studied from this verse. He is always unlimited. That means that He has no creation or end. ⑫ He is, however, death (in the form of time), as described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am death. I take away everything at the end of life." Eternal time is also without beginning, but it is the creator of all creatures. The example is given of touchstone, which creates many valuable stones and jewels but does not decrease in power. Similarly, creation occurs many times, everything is maintained, and, after a time, everything is annihilated—but the original creator, the Supreme Lord, remains untouched and undiminished in power. The secondary creation is made by Brahmā, but Brahmā is created by the Supreme Godhead. Lord Śiva annihilates the whole creation, but at the end he is also annihilated by Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu remains. In the Vedic hymns it is stated that in the beginning there is only Viṣṇu and that He alone remains at the end.

(11) Which form of Viṣṇu is the source of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva in the material world?
(12) What does it mean to say that Kṛṣṇa is death?

An example can help us to understand the inconceivable potency of the Supreme Lord. In the recent history of warfare the Supreme Personality of Godhead created a Hitler and, before that, a Napoleon Bonaparte, and they each killed many living entities in war. But in the end Bonaparte and Hitler were also killed. People are still very much interested in writing and reading books about Hitler and Bonaparte and how they killed so many people in war. Year after year many books are published for public reading regarding Hitler's killing thousands of Jews in confinement. But no one is researching who killed Hitler and who created such a gigantic killer of human beings. The devotees of the Lord are not much interested in the study of the flickering history of the world. They are interested only in Him who is the original creator, maintainer and annihilator. That is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

20 न वै स्वपक्षोऽस्य विपक्ष एव वा
परस्य मृत्योर्विशतः समं प्रजाः
तं धावमानमनुधावन्त्यनीशा
यथा रजांस्यनिलं भूतसङ्घाः

na vai sva-pakṣo 'sya vipakṣa eva vā
parasya mṛtyor viśataḥ samaṁ prajāḥ
taṁ dhāvamānam anudhāvanty anīśā
yathā rajāṁsy anilaṁ bhūta-saṅghāḥ

na—not; *vai*—however; *sva-pakṣaḥ*—ally; *asya*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *vipakṣaḥ*—enemy; *eva*—certainly; *vā*—or; *parasya*—of the Supreme; *mṛtyoḥ*—in the form of time; *viśataḥ*—entering; *samam*—equally; *prajāḥ*—living entities; *tam*—Him; *dhāvamānam*—moving; *anudhāvanti*—follow behind; *anīśāḥ*—dependent living entities; *yathā*—as; *rajāṁsi*—particles of dust; *anilam*—the wind; *bhūta-saṅghāḥ*—other material elements.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His feature of eternal time, is present in the material world and is neutral towards everyone. No one is His ally, and no one is His enemy. Within the jurisdiction of the time element, everyone enjoys or suffers the result of his own karma, or fruitive activities. As, when the wind blows, small particles of dust fly in the air, so, according to one's particular karma, one suffers or enjoys material life.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Chance To End Suffering

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in April 1975 during an early-morning walk in Mayapur, India.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes people argue that if there is no God, it doesn't matter what I do, and if there is a God, then He is controlling everything and it still doesn't matter what I do, because everything is predetermined anyway. In either case, I am free to do anything I like.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but why do you suffer?

Disciple: Well, it's all God's plan. I suffer according to God's plan.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. It is not God's plan that you suffer; you suffer because you violate God's laws. He is controlling everything, but He has given you minute independence: You can either follow His laws or violate them. But you are so foolish that you do not understand you are suffering. Your position is like that of the cats and dogs, who also cannot understand that they are suffering.

Our point is that you are suffering because you have violated God's laws, and if you become obedient to God you will not suffer.

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But you are such a fool, such a rascal, that you do not even know that you are suffering.

Disciple: But the devotees also seem to be suffering.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but they are not suffering like the nondevotees. Material life, which is the cause of suffering, is like a disease, and devotees are giving up this diseased condition of life for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you are suffering from some disease, you cannot expect to be cured immediately. But one who is taking the medicine is very intelligent. His sufferings will soon be gone. But these nondevotee rascals will not even take the medicine—Kṛṣṇa consciousness—so they will continue to suffer.

And for the most part, devotees enjoy. Why are you always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing unless you are enjoying?

Disciple: Sometimes I get a sick stomach, too.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's because you have a material body. But your suffering is just like the movement of a fan that has been switched off. The fan is still moving, but the switch is off; so it will soon stop. Similarly, your suffering will soon stop, because you are acting on the spiritual platform. And after giving up this body, you will have a completely blissful life. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.9], *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti:* "After giving up the body, a devotee doesn't take birth again in the material world." You are not going to get another material body, full of suffering. That is your advantage.

But these nondevotee rascals are going to continue getting body after body, all full of suffering. They will have to accept one body and suffer, and then again they'll have to give up that body and take another body and suffer. As long as one accepts a material body he will have to suffer, because having a material body means suffering. So those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious will change bodies one after another and continue to suffer the threefold miseries [those caused by the body and mind, those caused by other living beings, and those caused by natural calamities].

But devotees, even if they appear to be undergoing some suffering, will eventually give up the material body and remain in their spiritual body, free from all suffering.

Disciple: [*taking the position of a materialist*] That is simply your faith.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And it is your faith that you do not believe it. We are accepting the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* on faith, so we have a chance of getting promoted to the spiritual world. But you have no faith, so you are sure to continue suffering in the material world. We are at least willing to take the chance, but you are so foolish that you are not willing to take the chance. So your suffering is sure to continue.

Disciple: Indians often say, "Well, I will take the chance when Kṛṣṇa wishes. His will is supreme, so whenever He wishes He will make me Kṛṣṇa conscious."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.66], Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* "Give up all your nonsense and surrender unto Me. Become Kṛṣṇa conscious." So, Kṛṣṇa wishes that you surrender to Him. Why don't you obey His wish?

Disciple: Why does Kṛṣṇa arrange for the pleasures of sense gratification if they only bring us suffering?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Again, the same answer: Kṛṣṇa has given us minute independence—we can use our senses for either sense gratification or for serving Him, which is the real pleasure of the senses. The senses are meant for enjoyment, but if you try to enjoy your senses in a diseased way—by gratifying them—that is your misfortune, and you will have to suffer. You have to cure your disease by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then you will enjoy unlimitedly.

We are not like the Māyāvādīs [impersonalists], who want to destroy the senses and become senseless. That is not our program. We want to purify the senses

CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to **www.krishnadays.com**.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

December 11–January 9

(*Month of Nārāyana*)

JANUARY

5—Putradā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

January 10–February 7

(*Month of Mādhava*)

14—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

15—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and author of *Gīta-govinda.*

19—Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

28—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī, the consort of Lord Caitanya.

30—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon.

FEBRUARY

1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

2—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, an eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

3—Bhaimī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon. Feast tomorrow.

4—Appearance of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation.

5—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon.

7—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

February 8–March 8

(*Month of Govinda*)

12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

18—Vijayā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

20—Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

22—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

MARCH

4—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

5—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

8—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa himself in the role of his own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

(*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam*). Suppose a man cannot see because he has glaucoma. The Māyāvāda program is that if your eye is giving you trouble and you cannot see, pluck it out. That is not our program. We want to cure the disease so you can see very nicely. So, our senses should be cured of the material disease by our practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then we will be able to enjoy real sense pleasure by using our senses in the service of Hṛṣīkeśa [Kṛṣṇa], the master of the senses.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-

Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa

/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)

KṚṢṆA ON THE PAGE

A Spiritual Approach To Teaching Kids to Read

A new series of books helps children learn to read without absorbing the materialistic values presented in other reading books.

By Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

IN THE HOLY CITY of Mayapur, India, schoolchildren, ready for reading class, crowd around a desk covered with books.

"Look at that!" one boy says with so much excitement that he jumps from his seat. "The boys in this book are vegetarian!"

Although the children live in a Kṛṣṇa-saturated environment, to learn how to read they've had to use books filled with materialistic messages. Until now.

In Belgium a six-year-old girl who learned French in school sits down to learn English with her mother, a Kṛṣṇa devotee, in the afternoons. Having to rely on educational materials written by nondevotees, the mother thinks how difficult it is to raise children with spiritual values and still give them an excellent education. "Why can't I do both?" she asks herself. Now she can.

Śrī Prahlāda Dāsa grew up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Australia in the 70s and 80s. For his academic education, his teachers had to use books and materials

DR BEST
Learn to Read
with the MagicPEN
Set A
Set B
Set C
Forests Fire

Padmavati listens to each character in the

Rocks in My Pack
Mr. and Mrs. Trish
We Can Run in the S…
Look for My Krishna
The Priest and the Cobbler
Song of the

Learn to Read *series by touching them with the MagicPen.*

opposed to spiritual values. Like so many children in families and communities dedicated to spiritual life, he told me he had longed for academic books that would also speak to his heart.

Decades later, the problem continued. Then, in 2007, some devotee teachers gathered dozens of reading systems from the top publishers of all the English-speaking countries of the world. From our experience with such books in our own classrooms, we expected to find patterns of materialist propaganda. But we had never looked at so many books from so many authors and companies. Nor had we looked at such books with a view to creating our own. Perhaps that perspective allowed us to see at a greater depth than before. The specifics of the underlying messages and themes, molding children's thoughts and desires, surprised us.

You might guess what was portrayed, over and over, as an ideal life. It was all middle-class families, none rich or poor. Most of them lived in suburbs, a few in the city, but very few on a farm. The rural families didn't farm with oxen or horses. No family had more than three children. Of course most books also showed examples of broken families as an alternative ideal. No family ever did anything religious, although some books showed festivals and dress of various cultures. Not only was religion absent, but no books showed renunciants at all, or anyone who lived an austere life for the sake of spirituality.

I had expected to see success shown as a secular, middle-class family, but I was unprepared for what I found in nonfiction stories of animals, or any story that involved predator and prey. Although meat-eating by humans pervaded the books, the animal stories gave an opposite message. In all cases except where the prey was an insect, the prey would escape from the predator. Young readers were clearly expected to identify with the prey, seeing the predator as a dangerous enemy. Yet, although the authors showed no sympathy for the hunger of the carnivorous animals, they consistently showed nonvegetarian food in stories of humans. Such hypocritical and unnatural treatment of meat-eating —opposing it in carnivorous animals but accepting it as normal in humans—was pervasive.

Sonia Chaudhary

At the Sandipani Muni School in Vrindavan, India, Babita Sharma (above) introduces her students to the Learn to Read *series and Nandini (right) shows Ambika how to use the MagicPen.*

All of the books we reviewed were from various series designed to teach young children how to read. But they teach much more than how to turn symbols into speech and meaning. They teach a particular perspective on life, along with socially accepted identities that have corresponding actions and mindsets.

"What do you propose as an alternative?" someone might ask. "Something neutral?"

No, because neutrality—like trying to stop all thought and desires and become nothing—is impossible. Reading instruction must involve reading *something*, and that something must have a message.

"How about looking for educational materials that present a wide range of values and definitions of success?"

Publishers prefer a consistent message throughout their books, since children naturally tend to see the world as orderly, with clear boundaries. Perhaps children could benefit by learning to read from sources with many conflicting messages, but I doubt that. Besides, no publisher I know of produces such a program. And the consistent message in learn-to-read books is materialistic.

We found that no reading program supported values such as vegetarianism, reincarnation, simple living, spiri-

Sonia Chaudhary

tual life, and love for Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, all existing programs promoted the opposite. This problem is not new, and Prabhupāda expressed concern about it in 1970: "What one learns as a child is not lost throughout life. So [producing children's educational books] is a very important business. Please execute it with great care and seriousness of purpose."

An Alternative Is Born

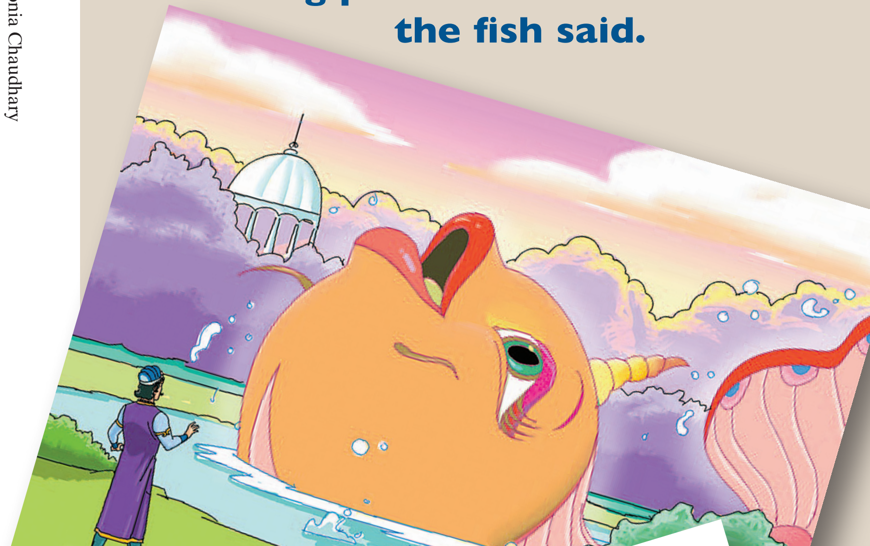
Starting in 2007, a few devotees interested in education decided to produce a revolutionary reading program. After three years, the efforts of an international team of two hundred people resulted in a learn-to-read series consisting of forty-two color storybooks, forty-one black-and-white activity books and guides, and three "MagicPens."

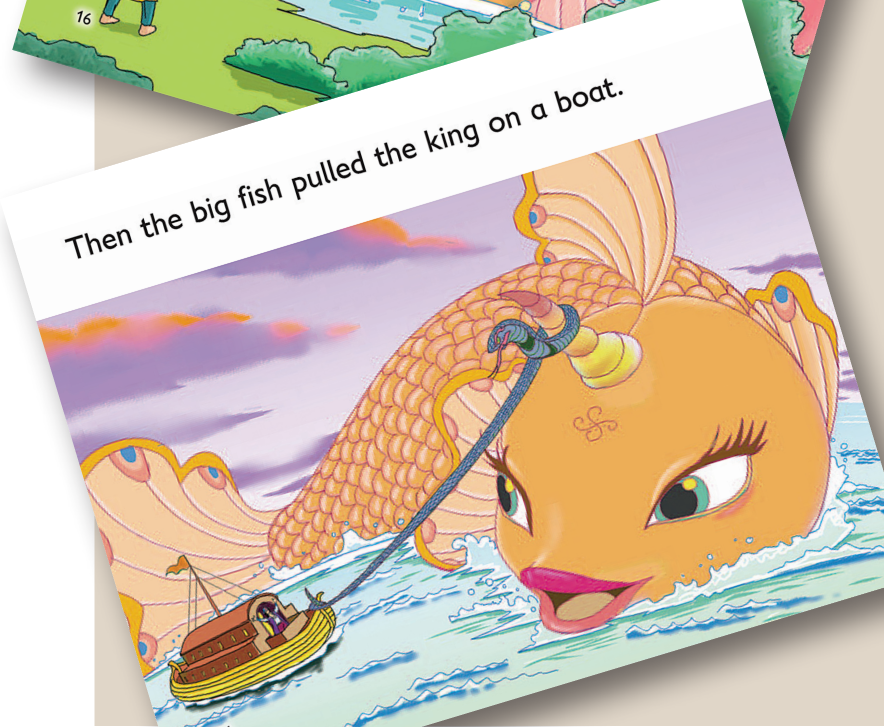
On seeing the books in 2010, Śrī Prahlāda Dāsa felt he had found what he had wanted in his childhood.

"The stories in these books bring tears to my eyes with their sweetness and devotion," he wrote, "food for my soul, spiritual and moral instruction, and creative mental imagery for my mind with their beautiful colorful pictures. Another significant and exciting thing about these books is that they systematically develop the child's reading skills with their gradually increasing complexity, teaching children to read at higher levels. I wish I had books like this to engage and instruct me when I was a child

The Fish Got Bigger
DR. BEST LEARN TO READ
Retold by
Urmila Devi-Dasi
Illustrated by
Karuna Krishna Dasa
and Yang Rong
Guided Reading Level
F
Blue 10

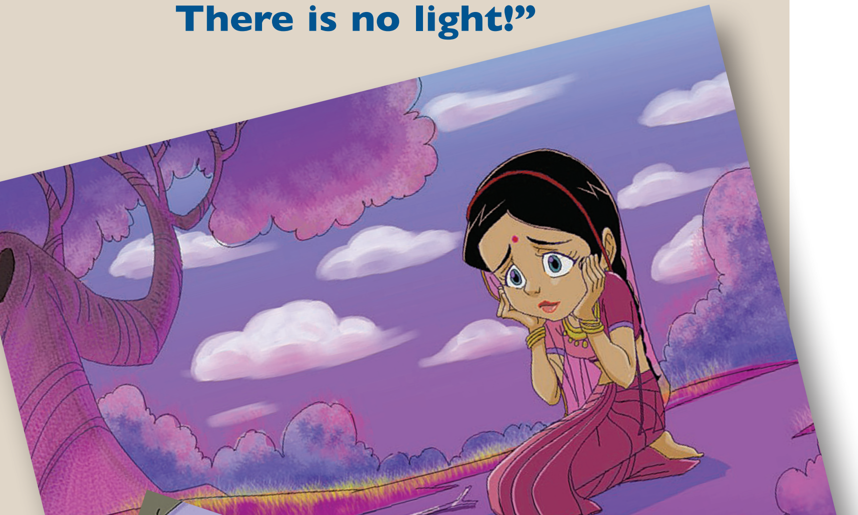
**The fish got bigger.
"Help! I have no room to
swim and float! It is not a
big pond. It is too small!"
the fish said.**

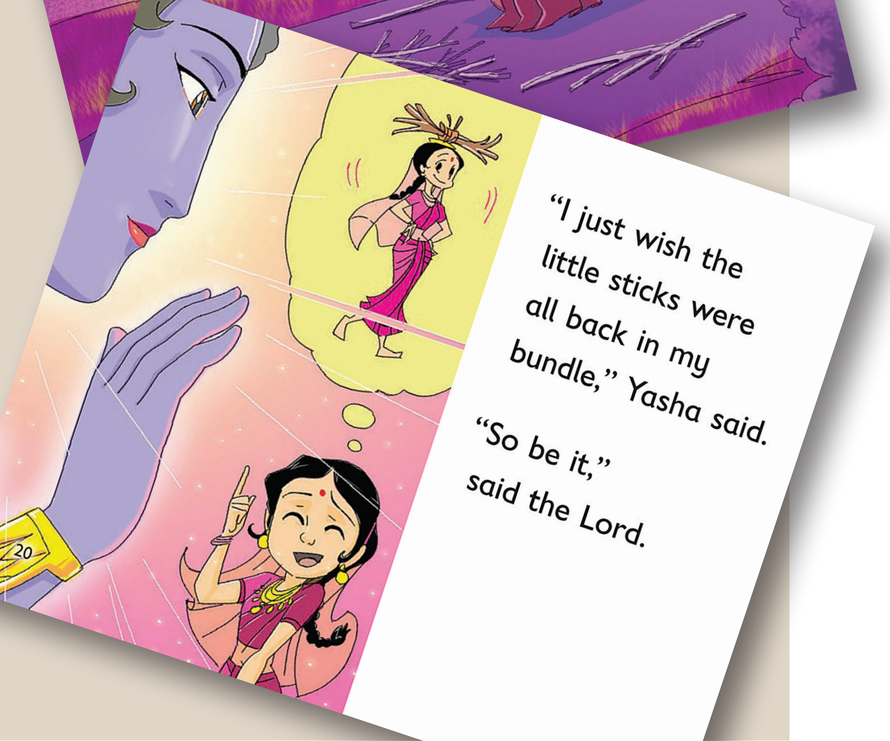



Then the big fish pulled the king on a boat.

DR. BEST LEARN TO READ
Little Sticks
Retold by
Urmila Devi-Dasi
Illustrated by
Karuna Krishna Dasa
and Yang Rong
Guided Reading Level
F
Blue 10

“Yes, I have some of the sticks,” said Yasha. “But I cannot see the rest of them! The sun is down! There is no light!”




“I just wish the little sticks were all back in my bundle,” Yasha said.
“So be it,” said the Lord.
20

growing up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Knowing that future generations of Kṛṣṇa kids will have access to this wonderful resource makes me happy.”

A spiritually based learn-to-read program is not just a way to make a few children, parents, and teachers happy. It is also an important step in changing society. All those who long for a life and a world of harmony, peace, and beauty can reflect on Prabhupāda’s instruction: “Start educational institutions in different parts of the world to train children, starting at the age of five years. Thus such children will not become hippies or spoiled children of society; rather, they can all become devotees of the Lord. The face of the world will then change automatically.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.12.23, Purport)

So what kind of face would we like the world to have? Imagine if anywhere we could go there was a restaurant serving sanctified vegetarian food; if all the milk people drank came from protected cows; if all the music, media, and entertainment was spiritually enlivening; if all of the fruits, vegetables, the water, the air, and the land was pure and sanctified; if the governments were full of saintly heroic leaders; if it was easy to maintain ourselves in such a way that we naturally think of Kṛṣṇa. To change our own individual world, we must change our thoughts and desires. To change the world in general, we must instill children with spiritual desires.

The new book series is being used for social change in Vrindavan, India, the holy place where Kṛṣṇa appears in this world. There, in two schools—one for the poorest children and one for the privileged—children are getting a message of caring for cows humanely and celebrating traditional festivals in ecologically supportive ways, along with the philosophy and stories of their own Kṛṣṇa conscious culture, which is quickly suffocating under a blanket of consumerism. Within two months of starting to learn English with the new series of books, children were talking more about serving Vrindavan than about moving to Delhi to become wealthy engineers.

My Early Motivation

My journey with wanting children’s books that supported a spiritual life and worldview started as a personal one rather than a desire to change the world. Back in the ’70s before the public heard that vegetarian was healthy, before yoga studios appeared in small American towns, before *kīrtana* singers attracted big audiences, our first son was born. He learned to read early.

“‘Kṛṣṇa’ is K-R-S-N-A with three dots, but no dot on the K or the A,” he said one day at age three.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had encouraged children’s books as early in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement’s history as 1968, so a few storybooks were available for our child to practice his new skills. But they were very few. And Prabhupāda wanted more than just story-

Students at the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and International School in Vrindavan are enchanted when the Bhagavad-gītā *comes alive in their English class.*

books, as indicated by these excerpts from letters he wrote in the late ’60s and early ’70s:

“It is good to note that you are writing these children’s books to comply with the academic standards of the public school.”

“These children’s books are very important because our next program is to start children’s schools.”

“Make some nice Kṛṣṇa conscious children’s books, and we shall then see to printing them.”

“You can write many books for children and insert pictures, then they will be a sure success . . . The books should be written in simple language. Therefore do this work very carefully to explain simply and directly who is Kṛṣṇa, who we are, what is the material world, what is the relationship of Kṛṣṇa with the living entities, how we should act in that relationship, etc. And if you can illustrate these books with

Dhīra Bhakta Dāsa uses Dr. Best Learn to Read *in government schools in Wales, U.K., as part of mandated religious education classes.*

pictures, they will certainly become very, very popular in the schools."

I now sit with two of my son's children and teach them reading with the new books. If we take a day off, they beg for reading class, and they are learning so quickly, I am astonished. When we finish a class, they take the word lists and study on their own, creating their own sentences and books. They look for the words they are learning in any other print they can find throughout the day. It's hard to end class each day.

It is interesting to see that although they are very different learners—the four-year-old boy is systematic and tries to figure out the rules, whereas the six-year-old girl is a creative thinker who asks deep questions with "How come?" and "What if?"—they are both learning easily and in their own style. The program naturally adjusts to them with no effort on my part.

Once, as my daughter-in-law and I notice they've been talking about the stories repeatedly for days, I comment, "Most stories in early learn-to-read books are so boring, no one wants to read them."

Hearing our discussion, thirteen-year-old Chakra calls out from his room, "The stories are so much fun, I like to read them myself!"

In fact, it is common for me to get letters saying that older children or adults are having so much fun with the books that the children for whom they were purchased have to beg to read them.

I taught hundreds of children how to read during about three decades of being a teacher, but children didn't like reading class this much. Is it the spiritual content? The variety of illustrations from international artists? The fact that devotees who are professional animators did that many illustrations? Or that even the beginning stories have a real plot? Or that the series can support varieties of teaching techniques, even though some proponents of each claim these methods cannot be reconciled? Or that two of the top five literacy experts in the world gave book-by-book guidance? Or that the pages talk in twenty-five languages and the pictures speak?

Talking Books

Books that talk? How did that happen? In 2009 we printed a test run of six titles. After we'd sold 2,000 of the 2,400 books in two days, I met the head of Mantralingua Publishing in London and learned about a new technology that embeds audio files into ordinary paper using nearly invisible dots. Our books would be able to talk with the touch of a special penlike device. We decided to have each page of text speak in twenty-five languages. The characters in the pictures would also talk, adding dialogue and songs beyond the text. Children and teachers could also record their voices into the pages. No other learn-to-read book in the world had such features.

Robene of Mantralingua told us, "Have devotees of Kṛṣṇa do the reading of the text, rather than use professional actors who are not devotees. The mood of the speaker comes through the recording, and you want people who love the stories."

Twenty thousand sound files later, his advice shines from every page as the characters in the five hundred pieces of original artwork speak to the young readers in a mood they appreciate.

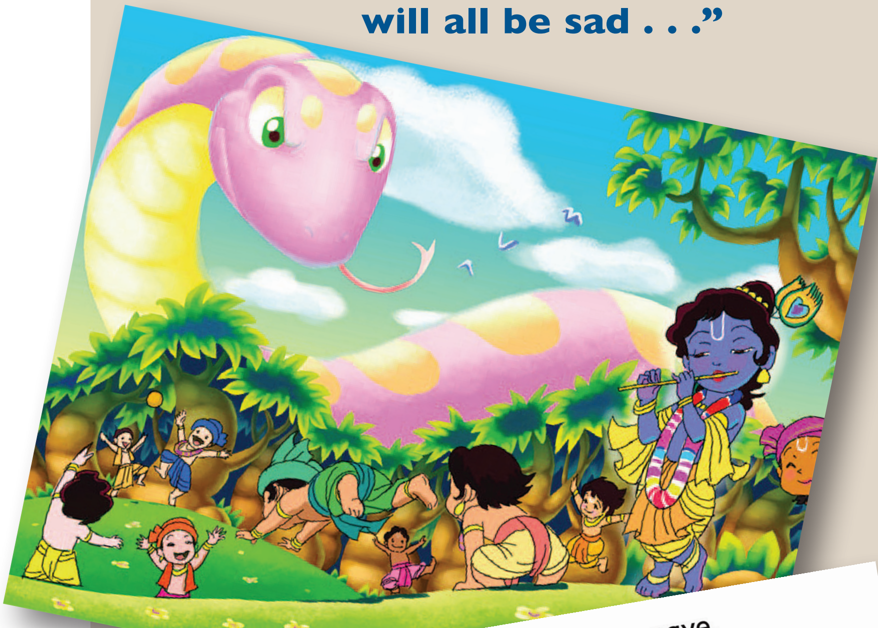
Soon after we made the decision to add this technology, I happened to hear in one of Prabhupāda's lectures: "Therefore I am stressing on this point [to the devotees publishing my books]: 'Where is the book? Where is the book? Where is the book?' So kindly help me. This is my request. Print as many books in as many languages [as possible] and distribute [them] throughout the whole world."

The thought of Prabhupāda smiling at these children's books filled with Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, with instructive stories Prabhupāda told us, and with stories of simple living—and which could be heard in twenty-five languages—increased the joy I'd felt throughout the time I worked on the project.

When I was in Tirupati and Chennai in South India, local devotees took me to meet leaders in education in the Śrī Sampradāya, who worship Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu in the disciplic line from Rāmānujācārya. They were astounded to see their beloved stories and values in a series that uses the most scientific teaching methods. And they were thrilled to hear the books speak in their own languages of Telegu, Tamil, and Kannada, as much as the European devotees were

DR. BEST LEARN TO READ
The Wicked Snake
Retold by
Urmila Devi-Dasi
Illustrated by
Karuna Krishna Dasa
and Yang Rong
Guided Reading Level
G
Green 12

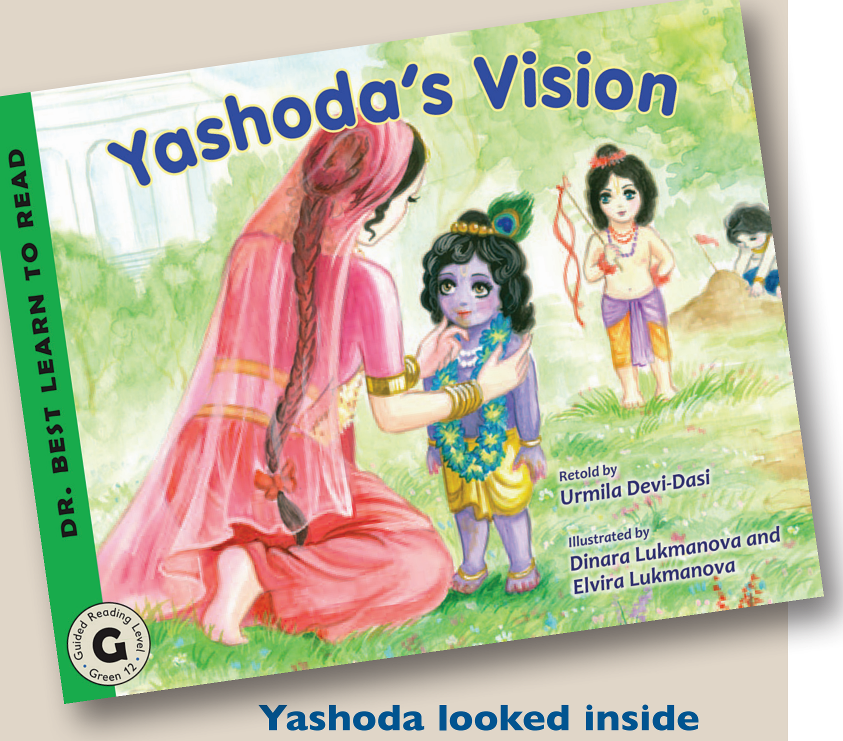
The wicked snake Agha saw them and had a plan. "I will kill the blue boy Krishna," he thought. "Then they will all be sad . . ."



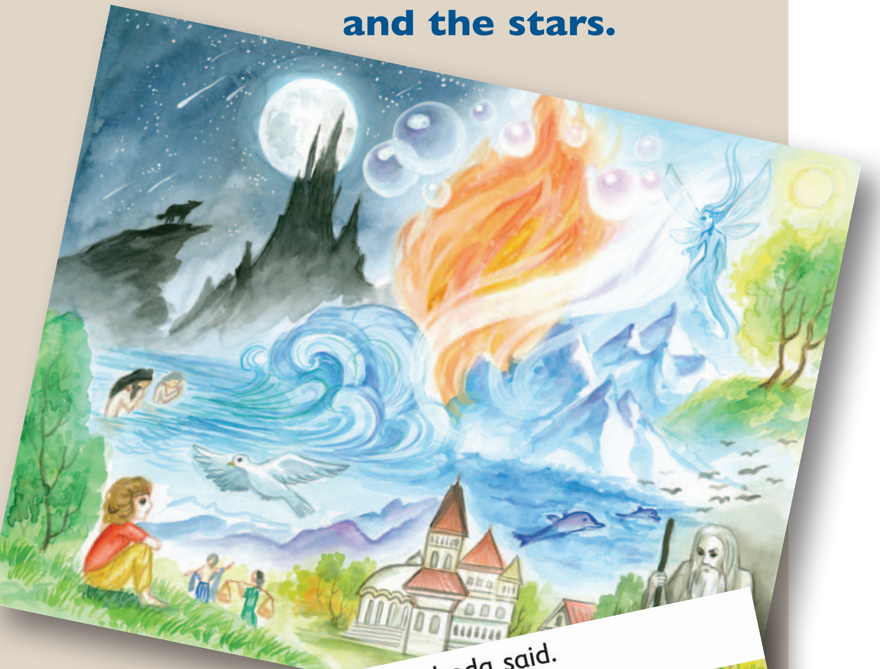
"We will go inside and play in this fun cave. Krishna will keep us safe from wicked snakes!"

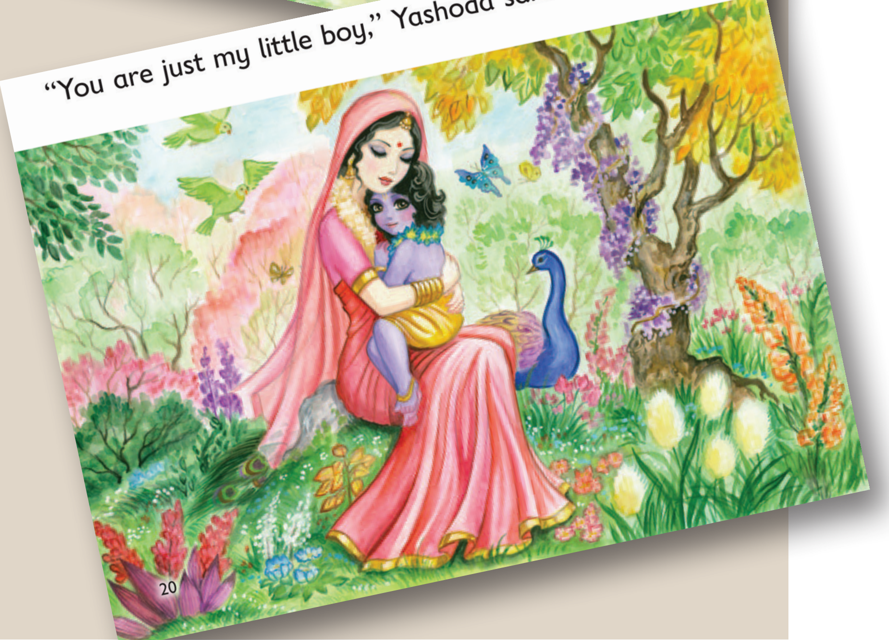
"Come inside!" they called.

10


DR. BEST LEARN TO READ
Yashoda's Vision
Retold by
Urmila Devi-Dasi
Illustrated by
Dinara Lukmanova and
Elvira Lukmanova
Guided Reading Level
G
Green 12

Yashoda looked inside Krishna's mouth. She saw the moon and the sun and the stars.





“You are just my little boy,” Yashoda said.

DR. BEST
Learn to Read
Set A
with the MagicPEN
TalkingPEN
Mantra Lingua, UK: connecting communities with technology
We Are Singing

amazed to hear Spanish, French, Russian, and Croatian come from otherwise ordinary paper.

Children who are not Indian, not Hindu, not devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and not even vegetarian or interested in reincarnation are also enchanted with the “magical” books. For example, we received this letter from the staff at Blaengarw Primary, a secular government school in Wales, UK: “We would like to thank you for the wonderful books you gave us for the children. They have enjoyed using them. We feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to enjoy these stories.”

The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is the first publisher in the world to have a learn-to-read series that speaks in twenty-five languages. We are also the first to have a series that can be used with various teaching techniques, including the whole-language technique and two kinds of phonics. And we are the first to have a reading series that promotes India's spiritual values while meeting professional educational standards.

For those of us who worked to produce this learn-to-read series, our greatest satisfaction comes from being part of a program that pleases the Lord and His pure devotees, who want to see as many people as possible molding their hearts and minds towards spiritual perfection. ❁

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, a BTG associate editor, has a Ph.D. in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Schoolchildren in London (top and left) are delighted to absorb themselves in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Even toddlers like Radharani (above) ask for the books over and over again.

UNDERSTANDING KARMA

And How to Stop It

Everyone has heard of karma, but hardly anyone knows how it works.

By Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

©Anthony Hall | Dreamstime.com

THE SANSKRIT WORD *karma* has gained mainstream acceptance today and found a place in the English dictionary. Karma as a philosophical principle, however, is little understood. Simply put, the law of karma states that every action we perform has a reaction. In the Biblical tradition this is phrased as "As you sow, so shall you reap."

Is the Law of Karma Scientific?

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that the law of karma is, like the other laws of nature discovered by modern science, a foundational principle governing the world we live in; no in the sense that it involves the interaction of non-quantifiable parameters like consciousness, free will, and motivation that are beyond the ken of classical physics.

Science has discovered that nature obeys laws for any interaction of any kind, from the microscopic level to the macroscopic level. In fact, classical physics is nothing but the study and application of nature's laws. If laws govern all of nature, wouldn't it be patently unscientific to claim that humans alone are the law-exempt odd man out? Of course, humans have subtle endowments like consciousness and free will, which insentient matter doesn't have and which are beyond the capacity of classical physics to precisely discern, quantify, and explain. However, does the inability of classical physics to explain a phenomenon automatically make that phenomenon nonexistent? The reality of consciousness is undeniable; all of us know it as a self-experienced reality. Even skeptics who deny the existence of consciousness are able to deny because they are conscious. Thus, consciousness is such an inescapable foundational ground-reality that its attempted denial becomes its undeniable proof. Given the inadequacy of physics to explain an aspect of reality as fundamental as consciousness, wouldn't it be unreasonably narrow-minded to exile out of our notions of reality so vital a field of knowledge as the interactions of consciousness by labeling it as "unscientific"? The human quest for knowledge is checked and choked by such narrow-mindedness. Physicist David Bohm calls for open-mindedness by reminding us that the realm of scientific study is potentially open-ended: "The possibility is always open that there may exist an unlimited variety of additional properties, qualities, entities, systems, levels, etc., to which apply correspondingly new kinds of laws of nature."

One such new level has been uncovered by quantum physics, which has supplanted classical physics in many fields. And quantum physics is increasingly recognizing consciousness as an integral aspect of reality. So it's possible that future development of quantum physics may acknowledge as scientific such concepts as the law of karma that are today deemed unscientific.

Moreover, the law of karma can be said to be scientific in another sense: We can use reason and logic —the basic cognitive faculties that undergird the scientific spirit of enquiry—to gain a general understanding of the workings of karma.

As one saying goes: We can never break God's laws; we can only break ourselves against God's laws. If a group of people say, "We don't believe in the law of gravity" and jump from the top of a ten-storey building, what will happen? They will definitely not break the law of gravity, but will surely break themselves against the law. Similarly, we can never break any of God's laws. Just as the law of gravity impartially acts on physical objects without discrimination, the law of karma impartially acts on living beings without discrimination.

How to Put BTG in Your Will

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put *Back to Godhead* in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. In the USA, bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government.* You can give needed support for *Back to Godhead* by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to* Back to Godhead, *18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615* (insert amount being given here) *to be used to support* Back to Godhead *and its related activities, including the Krishna.com website.*

A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name BTG as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living. It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

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*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.

Doubts About Karma

1. Why not action-reaction in one life?

The Vedic literature tells us that we eternal souls transmigrate from one body to another after death, taking our karmic reactions with us. Somebody may ask, "Why should I suffer now for my actions in a previous life? Why the delay?"

Every action we perform is like a seed sown. Just as different seeds, such as rice seeds or mango seeds, bear fruits at different rates, so do different karmic seeds. But while we can discard ripe produce if it turns out bad, we can't discard the bad fruit of our karmic seeds. We have to eat—suffer—every single karmic fruit we have sown.

Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.17) that karma works in complex ways difficult to understand. God knows best what reaction has to be given at what time and under what conditions. Therefore, some reactions may come in this lifetime, some in the next, and some in a distant future lifetime.

The workings of karma tally with another saying: "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine." Sooner or later, every single action will be accounted for.

2. Why are the ignorant not excused?

A citizen who breaks a state traffic law can't claim ignorance of the law as an excuse. A citizen using the roads provided by the state has the duty to learn the state laws. Similarly, because we are living in this world and taking air, water, sunlight, and food from nature, we need to know and follow the rules laid down by God, who gives what we need to live, including the knowledge of how to live. A system of religious and spiritual morality is found in almost every human society, and the onus is on us to take the education and orient our lives accordingly.

Another reason we can't use ignorance as an excuse for breaking God's laws is that we cause our own ignorance—because ignorance is the consequence of sin. For example, prisoners may lose access to good counsel and other aids to their betterment if they constantly reject the aids when they are available. Similarly, if we never get to know about the law of karma, then that's because by our actions we have shown God, "I am not interested in knowing about your laws; I don't care. I will do whatever I want."

So, people do wrong because of ignorance, and the wrong reinforces their ignorance, impelling them to further wrongdoings, thus creating a vicious cycle. The most practical and powerful way to break free from this cycle is through the process of devotional service, which the Lord teaches throughout history through his representatives or by descending Himself. To understand how devotional service frees us from the karmic cycle, let's look at the three types of action Kṛṣṇa talks about in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.17): karma, *vikarma,* and *akarma.*

Akarma ("no activity") doesn't mean inactivity, but activity that brings no reaction, activity that frees one from the cycle of birth and death.

Three Types of Action

The word *karma* has several connotations. It can mean an action, its reaction, or the whole system of action-reaction known as the law of karma.

In a scriptural sense, karma primarily means actions done in accordance with one's duties prescribed in the revealed scriptures. *Vikarma* refers to actions done contrary to the scriptures by the misuse of one's free will. *Vikarma* takes one down to the lower forms of life. The four main vikarmic activities, as mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.17.38), are intoxication, meat-eating, gambling, and illicit sex. These four lead to severe karmic reactions, which come both in future and in present lives. In this life, illicit sex leads to a variety of diseases; meat-eating leads to heart problems, cancer, and other diseases; gambling causes people to lose their self-control and eventually everything else. Intoxication, which people think is very enjoyable, is actually a ritual of self-torture. What starts with "Cheers!" often leads to tears; under the spell of intoxicants, people act in ways that cause them to lose their self-respect, their bank balance, their families, and sometimes even their lives.

Finally, *akarma,* which translates literally as "no activity," doesn't mean inactivity, but activity that brings no reaction, activity that frees one from the cycle of birth and death.

Complete Freedom From Karma

Devotional service to the Lord is *akarma.* It brings the ultimate freedom from karmic entanglement because by its very nature it is a transcendental activity. It also provides us with, among other things, four great gifts that help us progress to the pure spiritual platform.

1. The ability to distinguish right from wrong. When we practice devotional service, the Lord as the Supersoul in our heart grants us the knowledge to make the right choices. All of us can, at some time or other, hear the voice of conscience (*vivek buddhi*). When we start doing something wrong, the voice from inside warns, "Don't do this." When we want to do something right, the voice says, "Yes, do this now." When we practice devotional service and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, this inner voice becomes stronger, guiding us to make the right choices in life. Thus devotional service can grant us the knowledge to gradually become disentangled from all karma.

2. The determination to do right and avoid wrong. Devotional service saves us from (a) doing further bad karma and (b) the craving to do bad karma. It gives us the inner satisfaction that enables us to say no to all the sinful pleasure of this world. Thus, we not only know the right choices, but we also get the willpower to make those choices.

3. The lessening of sinful reactions. Certain reactions are destined to come to us from the past. But devotional service reduces those reactions. Instead of the complete reaction, the Lord gives devotees a token reaction so that they don't forget the miserable nature of this world.

4. The inner strength to face suffering. Whatever residual karma comes upon us, devotional service grants us the strength to tolerate the suffering. The more spiritually advanced, the more the devotee experiences the reality of this protection from Kṛṣṇa. So externally, pure devotees may seem to be in pain, but internally, because of their remembrance of the holy name, they don't feel the suffering.

Regardless of our past karma, the spiritually scientific process of devotional service is the best path to the highest happiness in this life and the next.

Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronic and telecommunications engineering and serves full time at ISKCON Pune. He is the author of eight books, including the upcoming Solving the Reincarnation Puzzle, *from which this article is adapted. To read his other articles and subscribe to his free ezine, register at www.thespiritualscientist.com.*

THE CROW STO
That Changed My Life

Devotional service to the Lord cures our sense of dissatisfaction, which impels us to always look elsewhere for happiness.

By Yugāvatāra Dāsa

AS MY FIRST M.B.B.S. (Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery) exam was getting closer, I was quickly moving away from peace. With shaking hands, dried-up mouth, and insomnia, I was almost into anxiety neurosis. I looked out of my hostel room and felt that everyone in the world was happy but me. I desperately needed some counseling.

The Crow Story

I approached my uncle, a very spiritual person, for help. He called me when he could give me some exclusive quality time. For the first fifteen minutes, he listened attentively as I vented my stress. He then told me the story of the crow.

A crow lived in the forest and was absolutely satisfied in life. But one day he saw a swan.

"This swan is so white," he thought, "and I am so black. This swan must be the happiest bird in the world."

He expressed his thoughts to the swan.

"Actually," the swan replied, "I was feeling that I was the happiest bird around until I saw a parrot, which has two colors. I now think the parrot is the happiest bird in creation."

The crow then approached the parrot.

The parrot explained, "I lived a very happy life—until I saw a peacock. I have only two colors, but the peacock has multiple colors."

The crow then visited a peacock in the zoo and saw that hundreds of people had gathered to see him. After the people had left, the crow approached the peacock.

"Dear peacock," the crow said, "you are so beautiful. Every day thousands of people come to see you. When people see me, they immediately shoo me away. I think you are the happiest bird on the planet."

The peacock replied, "I always thought that I was the most beautiful and happy bird on the planet. But because of my beauty, I am entrapped in this zoo. I have examined the zoo very carefully, and I have realized that the crow is the only bird not kept in a cage. So for the past few days I have been thinking that if I were a crow, I could happily roam everywhere."

This story summarizes our problem in this world: The crow thinks the swan is happy, the swan thinks the parrot is happy, the parrot thinks the peacock is happy, and the peacock thinks the crow is happy.

Our Story

Our story is similar to the crow story. When we are studying in

Crow: ©Alexander Cherednichenko | istockphoto.com. Peacock: ©Jaap2 | istockphoto.com.

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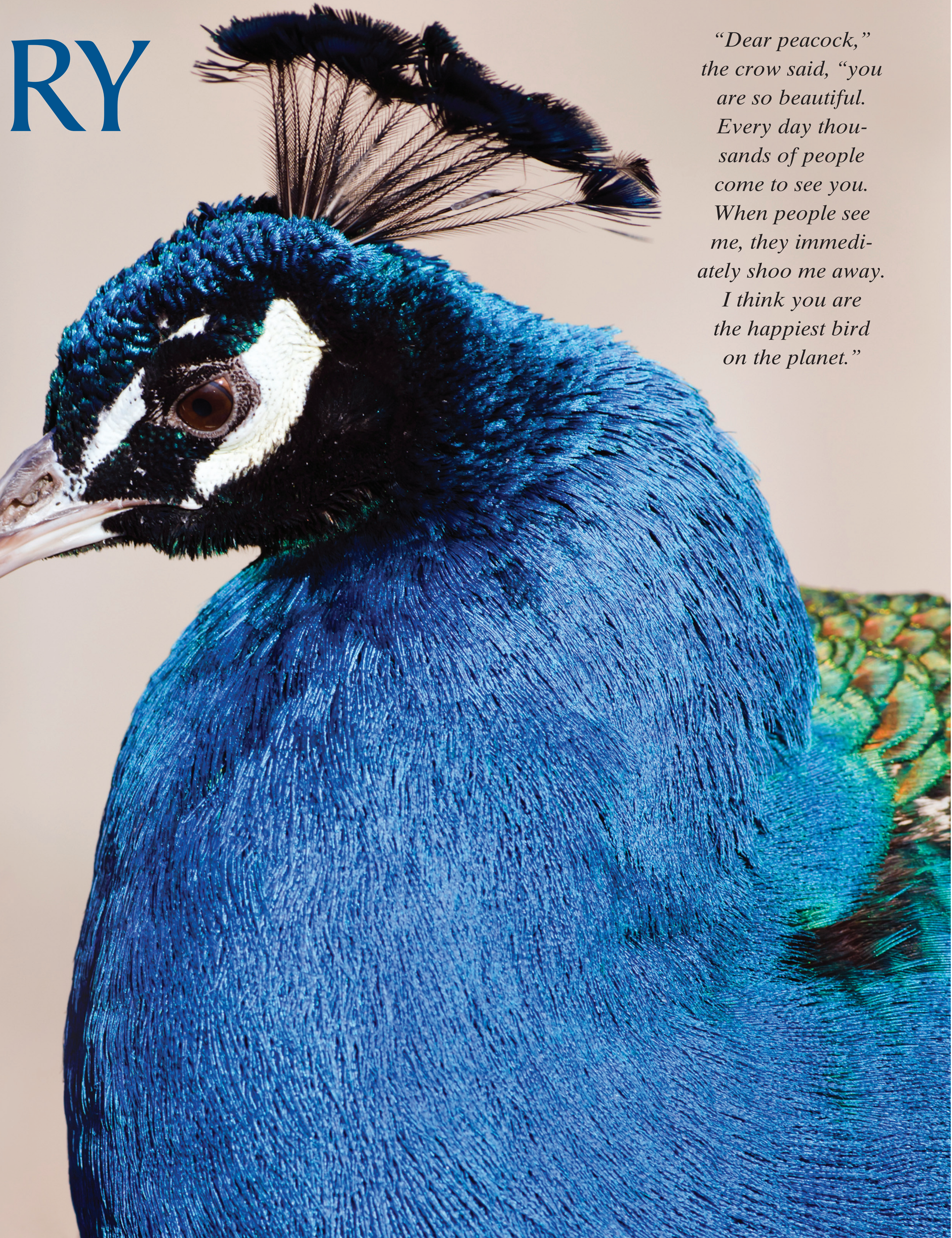

"Dear peacock," the crow said, "you are so beautiful. Every day thousands of people come to see you. When people see me, they immediately shoo me away. I think you are the happiest bird on the planet."

primary school, we want to grow up and go to secondary school. As we enter secondary school, we think the students of the junior college are happy because they don't have to follow such strict rules. In junior college we think the students of the professional college are happy, as they have been successful in fulfilling their dream of entering a medical, engineering, management, or other college. In the professional college we think those students who have graduated and gotten the best job, the best car, a good-looking wife, and a huge house are happy. But when we ourselves get the best job and the best of everything, we become engrossed in maintaining it all. As we struggle for existence in this rat race, sometimes we see those small, innocent primary-school children and think, "Oh, they are so happy. They don't have any responsibilities. They just go to school, study a bit, and play. What a life full of fun!"

So we see the story of the crow in action: Schoolchildren think college students are happy, college students think successful professionals are happy, and successful professionals think schoolchildren are happy.

Satisfied or Dissatisfied?

So what is the solution? The solution is to reach an absolute state of self-satisfaction. Of course that does not mean opposing the metamorphosis of a school student into a successful professional. We can give our best shot in every endeavor for success, but we must give up the deeply rooted illusory thought that happiness follows success. Even if success brings some happiness, it is impermanent. So as we endeavor for material success, we should make parallel endeavors for permanent happiness by practicing spirituality.

This blend is a perfect formula for long-lasting bliss. The main obstacle to real happiness is the desire for sense gratification. Once we indulge, we end up getting more agitated and eventually far away from the goal of eternal happiness. Thus a small indulgence snowballs into a major agitation of the mind and senses. Spirituality aims at reaching a state where a person is happy with his endeavors irrespective of success or failure. True spirituality nullifies our lamentations about the past and destroys our illusions about the future, thus making our present very pleasant.

Complete Satisfaction

Devotional service helps us train our senses and tame our mind. Chanting God's divine holy name purifies our senses. Presently our senses are impure. The tendency to exploit this world is the symptom of impure senses and mind. This world is the Lord's property, and so sense gratification means trying to enjoy His property. How can we become happy by stealing His property for our own gains? Devotional service means using God's property for His service. A devotee offers everything to the Lord and then accepts it for himself.

This small change can bring about a paradigm shift in our life. It will extinguish the fire of exploitation and kindle the dormant devotional service in the heart.

As sons of God we are the rightful heirs to His property, provided we follow His instructions. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains this principle in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29):

bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
    sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
    jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati

"A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries."

The story of the crow changed my life by helping me realize that I should learn to be satisfied. But it was Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings that taught me how to be satisfied by taking shelter of the Lord by chanting the holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

I would like to proudly say that after I took shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, I was never again tense during examinations. Exam or no exam, I enjoyed the ecstasy of studying as an offering to God.

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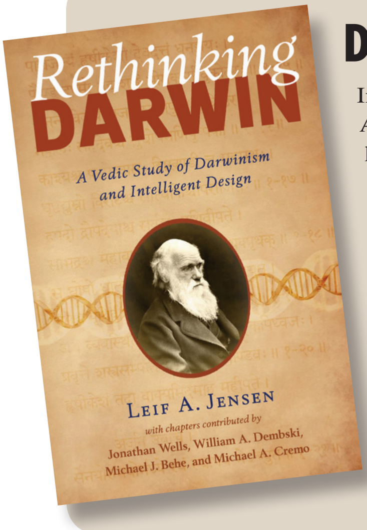
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A Vedic Study of Darwinism and Intelligent Design
Leif A. Jensen
with chapters contributed by
Jonathan Wells, William A. Dembski,
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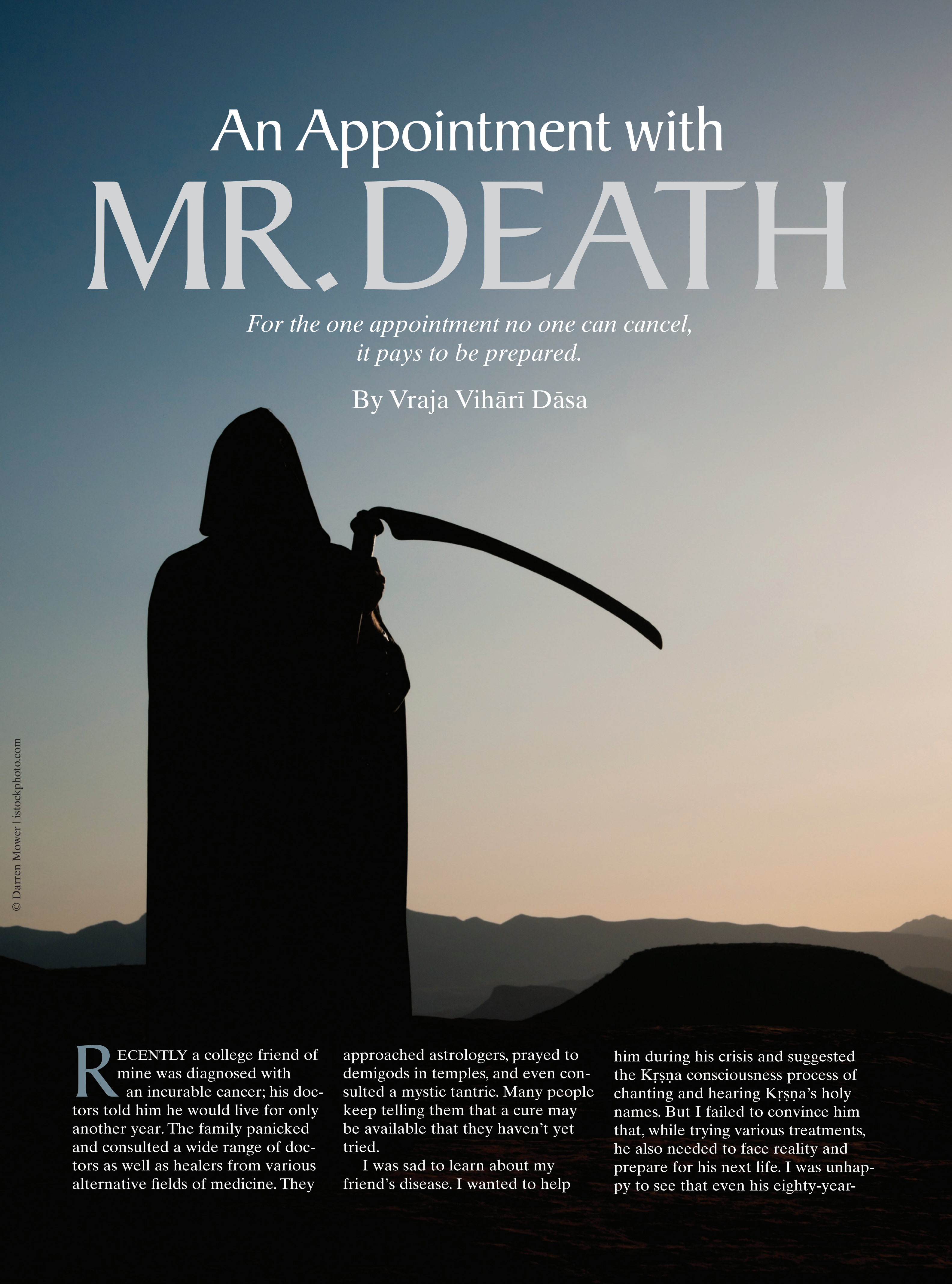
An Appointment with MR. DEATH

For the one appointment no one can cancel, it pays to be prepared.

By Vraja Vihārī Dāsa



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RECENTLY a college friend of mine was diagnosed with an incurable cancer; his doctors told him he would live for only another year. The family panicked and consulted a wide range of doctors as well as healers from various alternative fields of medicine. They approached astrologers, prayed to demigods in temples, and even consulted a mystic tantric. Many people keep telling them that a cure may be available that they haven't yet tried.

I was sad to learn about my friend's disease. I wanted to help him during his crisis and suggested the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process of chanting and hearing Kṛṣṇa's holy names. But I failed to convince him that, while trying various treatments, he also needed to face reality and prepare for his next life. I was unhappy to see that even his eighty-year-old father was uninterested in the spiritual dimension to life and determined only to save his son.

I remembered the observation of a devotee friend: "One may be admitted to the best hospital, treated by the best doctors, administered the best medicines, but if he is destined to die, he can't avoid an appointment with Mr. Death."

The philosophical writings of Vedic India compare the inevitability of death to the inescapable visit of someone who will get us one day. When Mr. Death strikes, a rich man can't bribe him to go away, a beautiful lady can't charm him to excuse her, a strong man can't wrestle him to submit, a wise person can't defeat him in a debate. Mr. Death gets us all, with no exceptions.

The Vedic tradition explains that our existence doesn't end with death—we are not our temporary body, but the eternal soul residing within.

In the ancient epic *Mahābhārata,* King Yudhiṣṭhira is asked what is the greatest wonder in the world. The wise king replies, "Every day thousands are sent to the abode of death. Yet those who are living lead their lives as if death will never happen to them." These words of wisdom helped me come to terms with the stubborn reluctance of my friend's family to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and with their refusal to accept the inevitability of death.

First Lessons in Spiritual Life

One of the first lessons I learned in spiritual life is the inevitability of death. Friends in college ridiculed me for subscribing to what seemed to them the fatalistic philosophy presented in ISKCON teachings. Their taunting made we wonder whether the Hare Kṛṣṇas were only pessimistic, but I soon realized that the acceptance of the unavoidable reality of death equips us with an internal fortitude and calmness. The Hare Kṛṣṇas were learning to see the world and its fleeting promises in a detached manner.

A devotee of Kṛṣṇa faces tragedies, including death, with grace and dignity. Still, devotees don't ignore their bodily conditions or make no attempt to avoid death. A spiritualist cares for the body with a desire to serve God and others. Since the goal is service and not bodily maintenance, the devotee is detached even while caring for the body, and is prepared to face inescapable death.

Teachings of the Vedas

The Vedic tradition explains that our existence doesn't end with death. We are not our temporary body, but the eternal soul residing within. When the body dies, the soul continues to live, although in a different state of existence. By cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we nourish the soul and our consciousness transcends petty material pursuits; we learn to live on the spiritual plane of reality and to connect to God, Kṛṣṇa, through spiritual practices. Hearing and chanting God's holy names helps us attain spiritual happiness, which helps us transcend material happiness and distress. Hearing and chanting also guarantees us a divine journey after death.

The Vedic literature gives many examples of persons whose lives teach us how to prepare ourselves to face the moment of death. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins with the enquiry of King Parīkṣit on the duty of a person about to die. Cursed to die in seven days, the king happily accepted his fate; he could now immerse his consciousness in remembrance of the Supreme Lord without any distractions. King Khatvāṅga, another exemplary person, on learning that he had only a moment to live relinquished all his riches and welcomed death.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Appeal

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that life is a preparation for an exam: death. The time of death tests all our cherished values and principles, as well as our attachment to our body and to people and things connected to our body. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa leads a life centered on service to God and carries out his worldly responsibilities maturely, knowing that the unpleasant vicissitudes of this world can bring the end at any time. Even if the devotee lives a long life, eventually time in the form of disease, old age, or death will threaten to take away all of the devotee's possessions and positions. But because devotees have invested their consciousness in remembering and loving God, they are prepared to meet Mr. Death cheerfully.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.58) that says that in this material world there is danger at every step. Death can come at any moment. He urged his readers and audiences to spend every moment remembering God so that at the eventual moment of death they would be fixed in an inner state of bliss, ready to enter the divine realm of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was himself such an example. In October 1977, when he realized that his body would give away soon, he retired to Vrindavan, the holy place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and activities, to engage in exclusive remembrance of God. When he was asked if he had any unfulfilled desires, he calmly said, "I have nothing to desire or hanker for." Śrīla Prabhupāda led a dedicated life of loving service to Kṛṣṇa, and when Kṛṣṇa came to take him back, he was ready.

Facing Death Cheerfully

At a festival of hearing and chanting the holy names last year, I had a sobering educational experience. During the daylong *kīrtanas* and discourses at ISKCON Mumbai, I was seated next to thirty-year-old Rohiṇī Tanaya Dāsa, who had been diagnosed with a malignant bone cancer. Like my college acquaintance, he had only months to live. But his response to the crisis inspired all the members of our community. He was absorbed in devotional activities; his face was beaming with happiness springing from a deep internal connection with Kṛṣṇa.

While sitting next to him during the program, I caught my mind feeling sorry for him. But I soon realized he was in the best state of consciousness, and I wished I had the same faith in the holy names and the process of devotional service. Later we spoke together about chanting the holy names and various aspects of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process.

"I welcome this disease," he said, "and consider it Kṛṣṇa's calling. Now my definition of what's important or irrelevant has changed; I seek to make Kṛṣṇa my exclusive goal."

I was humbled and enlivened in his company, and wished my dying college friend and his relatives could take a cue from him.

Rohiṇī Tanaya reminded me that for a sincere spiritual seeker, death is not the end; rather, it's the beginning of entering into the realm of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. For materialists, death is the end of every thing they identify with; therefore they are in great distress at that moment. On the other hand, a lover of God doesn't mind getting old or nearing death, because he knows that as the body is coming closer to death, the soul is coming closer to its eternal spiritual youthful form. Death for a devoteemeans joining Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world for an eternal life of service and bliss.

The two contrasting experiences, with a college friend and with a devotee, convinced me that the process of devotional service makes a person mature beyond his age. A thirty-year-old with a spiritual connection to God can have sagacity and maturity far beyond the myopic vision of an eighty-year-old bereft of spiritual knowledge.

Postscript

Rohiṇī Tanaya Dāsa passed from this world in the loving association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees chanting the holy names. He had been living as a resident *brahmacārī* at the ISKCON temple in Nigdi, outside Pune.

During his last moments, Rohiṇī Tanaya desired to be with the deities and devotees, so he was rushed to the temple, a four-hour drive from the hospital. On his arrival, all the resident devotees and more than five hundred congregation members performed an intense *kīrtana* for more than an hour. As the evening *ārati* started and the deities were greeted amidst loud chanting and the blowing of conch shells, indicating auspiciousness, Rohiṇī Tanaya cast his last loving glance at the devotees and, while prayerfully looking upon the deities, departed from his body.

Devotees cried and rejoiced simultaneously, for this was an extraordinary, inspirational departure. Devotees had witnessed that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not simply a theory but a practical science. Rohiṇī Tanaya had just shown by his example how a devotee fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness receives Mr. Death cheerfully.

Vraja Vihārī Dāsa, MBA, serves full-time at ISKCON Chowpatty (Mumbai) and teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness to students at various colleges.

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CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

(*continued from page 13*)

Then my family started pushing me to get married. When my mother came to Bangalore to look for a match, she was upset to see that I was now practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness openly, visiting the temple and inviting devotees to my home. She went to Saint Anthony's Church and enrolled me in a faith-healing program. The priest and nuns told her I had been brainwashed and needed help. Such comments made her anxious. After that, priests came regularly to my home to discuss my reasons for joining the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. I would answer them, and then they would pray for me and leave. The more this happened, the more intensely I prayed to Kṛṣṇa, Christ, and Lord Nṛsiṁha to protect me from this torture.

Out of respect for my mother I continued to go to church and faith-healing seminars. At the seminars, I would see people fall to the floor when the preacher would cry out loudly. The preacher would then declare how they had been healed. My mother would glance at me from the corner of her eye to see if there was any transformation in me. The only way to stop this, I realized, was to get married. My parents insisted I marry a Catholic girl; a devotee girl was completely out of the question. But I doubted I could find a Christian girl who could understand my way of life.

I enrolled in the church's Marriage Bureau. I insisted the girl be vegetarian, and the priest and sisters only raised their eyebrows and gave me puzzled looks. Some girls I met looked at me as if to say, "What on earth is this guy doing?"

I finally met Vilma, now my wife, and told her I was practicing the Vedic way of life. Fortunately, she was accepting. Her childhood neighbors had been Gujarati Vaiṣṇavas, so she had some idea what I was following. Although initially apprehensive, she managed to put her fears to rest after hearing my explanations. My mother was happy. She now handed to Vilma the baton to convert me back to the Christian faith.

Vilma observed me closely and asked many questions. We visited the ISKCON temple regularly, and in 2008 went together to Jagannatha Puri. After three years of marriage, she has almost given up eating meat. She read the book *Kṛṣṇa* and has started to chant one round of *japa* daily. I am glad she has been cooperative and supportive of my spiritual life. We have both realized that a God-centered family makes our life sublime and blissful.

I am now working for a bank in Saudi Arabia. Practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this country has its challenges. I hope I will soon be able to go back to India to engage myself in serving the devotees. I am grateful to my parents and the church for providing me the fertile ground of a spiritual environment by which I was able to grow the seed of *bhakti.* The journey so far has been rough but worthwhile, and my life has been transformed from nominal religionist to spiritual practitioner through the sublime process of chanting the holy names, remembering Kṛṣṇa, relishing tasty *prasāda,* and associating with loving devotees. ❁

REVOLUTIONIZE

(*continued from page 26*)

> all over the world, although he humbly thinks himself unfit for this work. That should be the attitude of all preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. We should never think of ourselves as great preachers, but should always consider that we are simply instrumental to the previous *ācāryas,* and simply by following in their footsteps we may be able to do something for the benefit of suffering humanity.
>
> —*The Nectar of Devotion,* Introduction

Just as Arjuna was an instrument in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa to defeat all the Kuru warriors on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, we should humbly place ourselves as instruments in the hands of Lord Caitanya and our guru to defeat the demoniac influence of the age of Kali.

The demoniac class of men has brought the earth planet under its control. Their team is very large. It consists of practically the entire human population. So what can a miniscule team of servants of God do to have a revolutionary impact on world history? It seems impossible, doesn't it? But just as light is more powerful than darkness, the followers of God are destined to ultimately be successful in the struggle between the culture of light and the culture of darkness.

Does one have to wait until his heart is completely pure, until he has fully realized Kṛṣṇa, before he tries to enlighten others with Kṛṣṇa consciousness? No. Whatever one has realized about Kṛṣṇa, he should propagate it as far as possible to a world completely ignorant about Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa sees his sincere endeavor, He will give His devotee more transcendental realization. In other words, the more you give Kṛṣṇa, the more you get Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore if you have not already done so, kindly at this very moment dedicate your life to revolutionizing your own heart and the entire world. It will be the most auspicious commitment you have ever made in millions upon millions of lifetimes. ❁

Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda since 1971, is an ISKCON initiating guru. Accompanied by his wife, Viṣṇupriyā Devī Dāsī, he regularly travels the globe to lecture on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In 2003 he launched an Internet-based training program called Ultimate Self Realization Course in which thirteen thousand people in more than a hundred countries are now enrolled. One can sign up for his course at www.ultimateselfrealization.com

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New Delhi, UP — 41/77, Punjabi Bagh (West), 110 026/ Tel. (11) 25222851 or 25227478/ iskcon.punjabi.bagh@pamho.net
Noida, UP — A-5, Sector-33, 201 301 (Opposite NTPC office)/ Tel. (120) 2506211
Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dhama, East Bank of Chandrabhaga River, Pandharpur, Dist. Solapur, 413 304/ Tel. (2186) 267242 or 267266, or 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net
Patna, Bihar — Sri Sri Banke Bihariji Mandir, Golok Dham, Budha Marg, Patna-1/ Tel. (612) 2220794, 2687637, or 2685081; or 09431021881/ Fax: (612) 2205929/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapoor Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (20) 41033222 or 41033223/ nvcc@iskconpune.in
Puri, Odisha — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 231440
Rajahmundry, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Goutami Ghat, 533 101/ Tel. (883) 2442277 or 2442288/ gopinathdasa@yahoo.com
Rajkot, Gujarat — Sri Sri Radha Neelmadhav Dham, Kalawad Rd., opposite Kankot Patiya, Mota Mava, 360 005/ Tel. 9898550185/ vaishnavseva@yahoo.co.in
Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Hare Krishna Land, Alopi Nagar, Opposite Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, Raipur 492 001/ Tel. (771) 5037555/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com
Ranaghat, WB — Gourdham, Habibpur, Ranaghat, Dist. Nadia, 741 403/ Tel. (3473) 281150 or 281226/ shyamrup.jps@pamho.net
Salem, TN — ISKCON, Hare Krishna Land, Karuppur 636 012/ Tel. (427) 2001686/ iskcon.salem@pamho.net
Secunderabad, AP — 27 St. John's Rd., 500 026/ Tel. (40) 780-5232/ Fax: (40) 814021
Silchar, Assam — Ambikapatti, Silchar, Dist. Cachar, 788 004/ Tel. (3842) 34615
Siliguri, WB — ISKCON Road, Gitalpara, 734 406/ Tel. (353) 426619, 539046, or 539082/ Fax: (353) 526130
Solapur, Maharashtra — Amruta Apartment, Old Akalkot Nagar, Dist. Solapur, 413 005/ Tel. 9371178393/ shursendas@yahoo.co.in
Srirangam, TN — 103 Amma Mandapam Rd., Srirangam, Trichy 620 006/ Tel. (431) 2433945/ iskcon_srirangam@yahoo.co.in
Surat, Gujarat — Ashram Rd., Jahangirpura, 395 005/ Tel. (261) 276-5891 or 276-5516/ surat@pamho.net
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala — Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014/ Tel. (471) 2328197/ jsdasa@yahoo.co.in
Tirunelveli, TN — 10B Tiruvananthapuram, Near Vannarapettai Circle, 627 002/ Tel. (462) 2501640
Tirupati, AP — K.T. Rd., Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (877) 2231760 or 2230009/ revati.raman.jps@pamho.net; Guestouse: guesthouse.tirupati@pamho.net
Udhampur, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Srila Prabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar, 182 101/ Tel. (1992) 270298/ info@iskconudhampur.com
Ujjain, MP — 35–37 Hare Krishna Land, Bharatpuri, 456 010/ Tel. (734) 2535000 or 2531000, or 9300969016/ Fax: (734) 2536000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamho.net
Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opp. B&B Polytechnic, Mota Bazaar, Dist. Anand, 388 120/ Tel. (26192) 230796 or 233012/ iskcon.vvnagar@pamho.net
Varanasi, UP — ISKCON, B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, Varanasi 221 010/ Tel. (542) 276422 or 222617
Vellore, TN — Chennai Ext. Centre, 10–12, 10th East Cross Rd., Gandhi Nagar, 632 006
Vijayawada, AP — Venkatapalem Karakatta Rd., Undavalli Village, Tadepalli Mandal, Vijayawada, Guntur Dist. 522 501/ Tel. (8645) 272513/ mmdasiskconvijayawada@gmail.com
Visakhapatnam, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Sagaranagar-45 (City office and mail: Plot No. 52, Pandurangapuram Beach Rd., Visakhapatnam 530 043)/ Tel. (891) 2528376 or 6537625/ samba.jps@pamho.net; Guesthouse: guesthouse.vizag@pamho.net
◆ **Vrindavan, UP —** Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Mathura Dist., 281 124/ Tel. & fax: (565) 2540728/ iskcon.vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse) Tel. (565) 2540022/ ramamani@sancharnet.in
Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (8712) 426182

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Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadhachiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (218) 623473
Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P. O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., R.R. Dist., 501 401/ Tel. (40) 65520070 or 9440057263/ naimisaranya@pamho.net
Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (731) 572794
Mayapur, WB — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)
Puri, Odisha — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 230494
Surat, Gujarat — Bhaktivedanta Rajavidyalaya, Krishnalok, Surat-Bardoli Rd. Gangapur, P. O. Gangadhara, Dist. Surat, 394 310/ Tel. (02622) 63546

Many temples have their own websites, which you can find at our online directory: http://directory.krishna.com. Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91). For information on international calling, go to www.howtocallabroad.com. ◆ Temples with restaurants or dining

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura, U.P.
Yamunanagar, Haryana — ISKCON-Hare Krishna Dham, Hare Krishna Marg, Raghunathpuri, Yamuna Nagar 135001/ Tel. (01732) 321001 or (mobile) 09355330775/ vishu_bakshi05@yahoo.co.in

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Kolkata, WB — Govinda's, ISKCON House, 22 Gurusaday Rd., 700 019/ Tel. (33) 24866922 or 24866009

MALAYSIA

Bahau — 156 Taman Sornam, Bahau 72100, Negeri Sembilan/ Tel. +60 (6) 481-4350 or 454-8982/ paramanandakp@yahoo.com
Bukit Mertajam — 429 Jalan Sungai Rambai, 14000 Bukit Mertajam/ Tel. +60 (4) 538-1276/ arumugam@notes.asemal.com.my
Ipoh — 15-H Jalan Lang, Jalan Padang, Tembak, 30000 Ipoh Perak, Darul Ridzuan/ Tel. +60 (5) 506-1601
Klang — No. 20, Lorong Besi 4, Off Jl. Teluk Pulai, Selangor D.E., 41100/ Tel. +60 (12) 6342464, (12) 3179206 or (603) 33712060/ ramram991@yahoo.com
Kuala Lumpur — Lot 9901, Jalan Awan Jawa, Taman Yarl, 58200 Kuala Lumpur/ Tel. +60 (3) 7980-7355/ Fax: +60 (3) 7987-9901/ president@iskconkl.com
Kuching — Lot 680, Block 250, Lorong Ketitir 3, Batu Kawa, 93250 Kuching, Sarawak/ Tel. +60 (82) 688-708/ kripa@tm.net.my
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Seremban — 28/7J Taman Desa, Temiang, 70200 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan (mail: 14 RJ 1/1, Taman Rasah Jaya, 70300 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan)/ Tel. +60 (6) 765-1379/ ppnada@tm.net.my
Sungei Petani — Lot 46, Jalan 1/6, Taman Sri Wang, 08000 Sungei Petani/ abbay_143@hotmail.com
Taiping — 24 Lorong Panglima (Cator Ave.), Assam Kumbang, 34000 Taiping, Perak D.R. (mail: 590 Jalan Wat Siam, Kampung Pinang, 34600 Kamunting, Taiping, Perak)/ Tel. +60 (5) 807-9702 or 808-1475
Teluk Intan — Jalan Sungai Manik, 36000 Teluk Intan, Perak/ Tel. +63 (32) 83254

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Chittagong, Bangladesh — Caitanya Cultural Society, 23 Nandan Kanan, N. N. Paul Blvd./ Tel. + 880 (31) 610822
Chittagong, Bangladesh — Sri Krishna Mandir, in front of Afmi Plaza, Prabartak Sangha (mail: P. O. Box 440)/ Tel. +880 (31) 2551950, 610822; or 1819395948/ iskconctg@gmail.com
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Dhaka, Bangladesh — 79 Swamibag, Dhaka-11/ Tel. +880 (2) 7122747 or 7122488/ info@iskconbd.org
Hong Kong — 6/F Oceanview Court, 27 Chatham Rd. South (mail: P.O. Box 98919)/ Tel. +852 2739-6818/ Fax: +852 (2) 724-2186/ iskcon.hong.kong@pamho.net
Jakarta, Indonesia — Yayasan Radha-Govinda, P.O. Box 2694, Jakarta Pusat 10001/ Tel. +62 (21) 489-9646/ matsyads@bogor.wasantara.net.id
Jessore, Bangladesh — Nitai Gaur Mandir, Kathakhali Bazaar P. O., Panjia
Jessore, Bangladesh — Sri Rup-Sanatan Smriti Tirtha Mandir, Ramshara, Magurahat P. O., Abhaynagar
Kathmandu, Nepal — Budhanilkantha (mail: GPO Box 3520)/ Tel. +977 (1) 4373790 or 4373786/ Fax: (1) 414409 (Attn: ISKCON)/ iskconkathmandu@gmail.com
Mandalay, Myanmar — ISKCON Sri Krishna Temple, Corner of 19th Thukha St., Nanshe, Mandalay/ sdas108@hotmail.com
Manila, Philippines — #9105 Banuyo St., San Antonio Village, Makati City/ Tel. & fax: +63 (2) 8901947; Tel. +63 (2) 8963357/ iskconmanila@yahoo.com
Myitkyina, Myanmar — ISKCON Sri Jagannath Temple, Bogyoke St., Shansu Taung, Myitkyina, Kachin State/ mahanadi@mptmail.net.mm
Osafia, Israel — P. O. Box 2232, Osafia Village 30090/ Tel. +972 (4) 839-2876
Sylhet, Bangladesh — Yugal Tila, Kajalshah, Opp. Osmani Medical College, Gate No. 1, Sylhet 03100/ Tel. +880 821721358, 1711478190, or 1718781144/ info@iskconsylhet.com
Tai Pei City, Taiwan — Zhong Xiao East Rd., Sec 2, Lane 39, Alley 2, No 3, 2F/ Tel. +886 (2) 2395-6010 or 2395-6715/ dayal.nitai.tkg@pamho.net
Tokyo, Japan — Subaru 1F, 4-19-6 Kamitakada, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164-0002/ Tel. +81 (3) 5343-9147, 80-5405-8977, or 80-5412-2528/ Fax: +81 (3) 5343-3812/ iskcon.japan@pamho.net
Yogyakarta, Indonesia — P. O. Box 25, Babarsari YK, DIY

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bangladesh (Kulaura) — Rangirkul Bidyashram, Kulaura, Dist. Moulvibazar/ Fax: +880 (8624) 88035
Bangladesh (Sri Pundarika Dhama) — Mekhla, Hathazari, Dist. Chittagong/ Tel. +880 (31) 610822
Bangladesh (Comilla) — Jagannathpur, Comilla
Indonesia (Govinda Kunja) — (contact ISKCON Jakarta)

RESTAURANTS

Tokyo — Vegetable-Kitchen Govinda's, 5-17-10 Nakano, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164-0001/Tel. +81 (3) 3387-8998; govindas_murata@yahoo.co.jp
Tokyo — Devadeva Cafe, 2-14-7 Kichijoji-Honcho, Musashino-City, Tokyo/ Tel. +81 (422) 21-6220; info@devadevacafe.com

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

Brampton-Mississauga, Ontario — Unit 20, 1030 Kamato Dr., L4W 4B6/ Tel. (416) 840-6587 or (905) 826-1290/ iskconbrampton@gmail.com
Calgary, Alberta — 313 Fourth St. N.E., T2E 3S3/ Tel. (403) 265-3302/ Fax: (403) 547-0795/ vamanstones@shaw.ca
Edmonton, Alberta — 9353 35th Ave. NW, T6E 5R5/ Tel. (780) 439-9999/ harekrishna.edmonton@gmail.com
Montreal, Quebec — 1626 Pie IX Blvd., H1V 2C5/ Tel. & fax: (514) 521-1301/ iskconmontreal@gmail.com
◆ **Ottawa, Ontario —** 212 Somerset St. E., K1N 6V4/ Tel. (613) 565-6544/ Fax: (613) 565-2575/ iskconottawa@sympatico.ca
Regina, Saskatchewan — 1279 Retallack St., S4T 2H8/ Tel. (306) 525-0002 or -6461/ jagadishadas@yahoo.com
Toronto, Ontario — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415/ Fax: (416) 922-1021/ toronto@iskcon.net
Vancouver, B.C. — 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby V5J 3G8/ Tel. (604) 433-9728/ Fax: (604) 648-8715/ akrura@krishna.com; Govinda's Bookstore & Cafe/ Tel. (604) 433-7100 or 1-888-433-8722

RURAL COMMUNITY

Ashcroft, B.C. — Saranagati Dhama, Venables Valley (mail: P.O. Box 99, VOK 1A0)/ Tel. (250) 457-7438/ Fax: (250) 453-9306/ iskconsaranagati@hotmail.com

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Austin, Texas — 10700 Jonwood Way, 78753/ Tel. (512) 835-2121/ Fax: (512) 835-8479 sda@backtohome.com
Baltimore, Maryland —200 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, 21228/ Tel. (410) 744-1624/ contact@iskconbaltimore.org
Berkeley, California — 2334 Stuart St., 94705/ Tel. (510) 649-8619/ Fax: (510) 665-9366/ rajan416@yahoo.com
Boise, Idaho — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274/ boise_temple@yahoo.com
Boston, Massachusetts — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/ Fax: (617) 909-5181/ darukrishna@iskconboston.org
Chicago, Illinois — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/ chicagoiskcon@yahoo.com
Columbus, Ohio — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ premvilasdas.rns@gmail.com
◆ **Dallas, Texas —** 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/ txkrishnas@aol.com; restaurant: vegetariantaste@aol.com
◆ **Denver, Colorado —** 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052/ info@krishnadenver.com
Detroit, Michigan — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000/ gaurangi108@hotmail.com
Gainesville, Florida — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ Fax: (352) 379-2927/ kalakantha.acbsp@pamho.net
Hartford, Connecticut — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/ pyari108@gmail.com
◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii —** 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-4913/ vcorbett108@gmail.com
Houston, Texas — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482/ Fax: (713) 956-9968/ management@iskconhouston.org
Kansas City, Missouri — 5201 Paseo Blvd./ Tel. (816) 924-5619/ Fax: (816) 924-5640/ rvc@rvc.edu
Laguna Beach, California — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ info@lagunatemple.com
Las Vegas, Nevada — 7181 Dean Martin Dr., 89118/ Tel. (702) 434-8332/ info@govindascenter.com
◆ **Los Angeles, California —** 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/ Fax: (310) 839-2715/ membership@harekrishnala.com
◆ **Miami, Florida —** 3220 Virginia St., 33133 (mail: 3109 Grand Ave. #491, Coconut Grove, FL 33133)/ Tel. (305) 442-7218/ devotionalservice@iskcon-miami.org
New Orleans, Louisiana — 2936 Esplanade Ave., 70119/ Tel. (504) 304-0032 (office) or (504) 638-3244
◆ **New York, New York —** 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn 11217/ Tel. (718) 855-6714/ Fax: (718) 875-6127/ ramabhadra@aol.com
◆ **New York, New York —** The Bhakti Center, 25 First Ave., 10003/ Tel. (212) 253-6182
Orlando, Florida — 2651 Rouse Rd., 32817/ Tel. (407) 257-3865/ info@iskconorlando.com
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — 41 West Allens Lane, 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600/ Fax: (215) 247-8702/ savecows@aol.com
◆ **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania —** 1408 South St., 19146/ Tel. (215) 985-9303/ savecows@aol.com
Phoenix, Arizona — 100 S. Weber Dr., Chandler, 85226/ Tel. (480) 705-4900/ Fax: (480) 705-4901/ premadhatridd@live.com
Portland, Oregon — 2095 NW Aloclek Dr., Suites 1107 & 1109, Hillsboro 97124/ Tel. (503) 675-5000/ info@iskconportland.com
◆ **St. Louis, Missouri —** 3926 Lindell Blvd., 63108/ Tel. (314) 535-8085 or 534-1708/ Fax: (314) 535-0672/ rpsdas@gmail.com
Salt Lake City, Utah — 965 E. 3370 South, 84106/ Tel. (801) 487-4005/ utahkrishnas@gmail.com
San Antonio, Texas — 6772 Oxford Trace, 78240/ Tel. (210) 401-6576/ aadasa@gmail.com
◆ **San Diego, California —** 1030 Grand Ave., Pacific Beach 92109/ Tel. (310) 895-0104/ Fax: (858) 483-0941/ krishna.sandiego@gmail.com
San Jose, California — 951 S. Bascom Ave., 95128/ Tel. (408) 293-4959/ iskconsanjose@yahoo.com
Seattle, Washington — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Sammamish 98075/ Tel. (425) 246-8436/ Fax: (425) 868-8928/ info@vedicculturalcenter.org
◆ **Spanish Fork, Utah —** Krishna Temple Project & KHQN Radio, 8628 S. State Rd., 84660/ Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (810) 798-9121/ carudas@earthlink.net
Tallahassee, Florida — 1323 Nylic St., 32304/ Tel. & fax: (850) 224-3803/ darudas@gmail.com
Towaco, New Jersey — 100 Jacksonville Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 109), 07082/ Tel. & fax: (973) 299-0970/ madhupati.jas@pamho.net
◆ **Tucson, Arizona —** 711 E. Blacklidge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (520) 792-0630/ Fax: (520) 791-0906/ sandaminidd@cs.com
Washington, D.C. — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100/ Fax: (301) 299-5025/ ad@pamho.net

RURAL COMMUNITIES

◆ **Alachua, Florida (New Raman Reti) —** 17306 N.W. 112th Blvd., 32615 (mail: P.O. Box 819, 32616)/ Tel. (386) 462-2017/ Fax: (386) 462-2641/ alachuatemple@gmail.com
Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan) — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ talavan@hughes.net
Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill) — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ Tel. (787) 367-3530 or (787) 737-1722/ manonatha@gmail.com
Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka) — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/ bkgoswami@earthlink.net

Centers Around the World

◆ **Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindaban) —** R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/ Tel. (304) 843-1600; Visitors, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 845-0023/ mail@newvrindaban.com
Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka) — 532 Murari Lane, 37359/ Tel. (931) 759-6888/ murari_sevaka@yahoo.com
Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — 534 Gita Nagari Rd./ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ dhruva.bts@pamho.net
Sandy Ridge, North Carolina — Prabhupada Village, 1283 Prabhupada Rd., 27046/ Tel. (336) 593-9888/ madanmohanmohini@yahoo.com

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Hato Rey, Puerto Rico — Tamal Krishna's Veggie Garden, 131 Eleanor Roosevelt, 00918/ Tel. (787) 754-6959/ Fax: (787) 756-7769/ tkveggiegarden@aol.com

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Belfast, Northern Ireland — Brooklands, 140 Upper Dunmurray Lane, BT17 OHE/ Tel. +44 (28) 9062 0530
Birmingham, England — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (121) 420 4999/ birmingham@iskcon.org.uk
Cardiff, Wales — The Soul Centre, 116 Cowbridge Rd., East Canton CF11 9DX/ Tel. +44 (29) 2039 0391/ the.soul.centre@pamho.net
Coventry, England — Kingfield Rd., Coventry (mail: 19 Gloucester St., Coventry CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (24) 7655 2822 or 5420/ haridas.kds@pamho.net
◆ **Dublin, Ireland —** 83 Middle Abbey St., Dublin 1/ Tel. +353 (1) 661 5095/ dublin@krishna.ie; Govinda's: info@govindas.ie
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◆ **London, England (city) —** 10 Soho St., W1D 3DL/ Tel. +44 (20) 7437-3662; residential /pujaris, 7439-3606; shop, 7287-0269; Govinda's Restaurant, 7437-4928/ Fax: +44 (20) 7439-1127/ london@pamho.net
◆ **London, England (country) —** Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts, WD25 8EZ/ Tel. +44 (1923) 851000/ Fax: +44 (1923) 851006/ info@krishnatemple.com; Guesthouse: bmguesthouse@krishna.com
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Somogyvamos — Krsna-völgy, Fö u. 38, 8699 Somogyvamos/ Tel. & fax: +36 (85) 540-002 or 340-185/ info@krisnavolgy.hu

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◆ **Rome —** Govinda Centro Hare Krsna, via Santa Maria del Pianto, 16, 00186/ Tel. +39 (06) 68891540/ govinda.roma@harekrsna.it
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Málaga — Ctra. Alora, 3, Int., 29140 Churriana/ Tel. +34 95 262-1038/ info@harekrishnamalaga.com

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Järna — Almviks Gård, 153 95/ Tel. +46 (8551) 52050/ Fax: +46 (8551) 52060/ info@almviksgard.se

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Vladivostok — Pikhtovaya St., 33/ Tel. +7 (4232) 35-30-26/ nram@list.ru

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AUSTRALIA

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Sydney — Govinda's Yoga & Meditation Centre, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst NSW 2010 (mail: P.O. Box 174, Kings Cross 1340)/ Tel. +61 (2) 9380-5162/ Fax: +61 (2) 9360-1736/ sita@govindas.com.au

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Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. +61 (2) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (2) 6672-5498/ ajita@in.com.au

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Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Vulture St., W. End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net

Burleigh Heads — Govindas, 20 James St., Burleigh Heads, QLD 4220/ Tel. +61 (7) 5607-0782/ ajita@in.com.au

Maroochydore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Ave., QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (7) 5451-0299

Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (3) 9650-2939

Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (3) 9650-1578

Newcastle — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 110 King St., corner of King & Wolf Streets, NSW 2300/ Tel. +61 (2) 4929-6900 / info@govindascafe.com.au

Perth — Govinda's Restaurant, 194 William St., Northbridge, W.A. 6003/ Tel. +61 (8) 9227-1648/ perth@pamho.net

Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (8) 9227-1684/ iskconperth@optusnet.com.au

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Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/ Tel. +679 812912

Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 666 4112/ regprakash@excite.com

Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building 11 Gulam Nadi St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/ Fax: +679 3477436/ vdas@frca.org.fj

Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa (mail: P.O. Box 204)/ Tel. +679 694243

Sigatoka, Fiji — Sri Sri Radha Damodar Temple, Off Mission St., Sigatoka Town/ Tel. +679 9373703/ drgsmarna@connect.com.fj

Suva, Fiji — 166 Brewster St. (mail: P.O. Box 4229, Samabula)/ Tel. +679 331 8441/ Fax: +679 3100016/ iskconsuva@connect.com.fj

Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands/ Tel. +64 (4) 472-2233

Wellington, NZ — Gaura Yoga Centre, 1st Floor, 175 Vivian St. (mail: P.O. Box 6271, Marion Square)/ Tel. +64 (4) 801-5500/ yoga@gaurayoga.co.nz

RURAL COMMUNITY

Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu)/ Tel. +64 (9) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (9) 412-7130

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Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa Street and Naviti Street/ Tel. +679 662990

Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Dolphins FNPF Place, Victoria Parade/ Tel. +679 314154/ vdas@govnet.gov.fj

Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Opposite University of the South Pacific, Laucala Bay Rd./ Tel. +679 311683/ vdas@govnet.gov.fj

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Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 82 Ratu Mara Rd., Samabula/ Tel. +679 386333

Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Terry Walk, Cumming St./ Tel. +679 312295

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Sunyani — Plot No. 146, South Ridge Estates (mail P.O. Box 685)

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Tarkwa — State Housing Estate, Cyanide

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Eastern Region — Hare Krishna Farm Community, P. O. Box 15, Old Akrade

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Abeokuta — Ibadan Rd., Obanatoka (mail: P.O. Box 5177)

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FROM THE EDITOR

Harm and Help from Technoworld

I SUPPOSE IT'S A SIGN I'm getting older, but I can't keep up with technology. It seems only the most dedicated electronics consumer can, with more gadgets and software coming out every day. I sometimes worry about a future when everything imaginable is within reach, or at least within virtual reach. We're already at the point where anyone with enough money can get pretty much anything they want from anywhere in the world. Long gone are the millennia when people lived their lives with whatever was locally produced.

Whether a wooden plow or a 4G cell phone, technology is always part of living in this world, and it has its benefits. But one danger of technology, especially of the modern variety, is that so much of it makes access to pleasure easier. By *pleasure* I mean the fleeting delight our senses give us, as opposed to deep, lasting happiness. It can be said, in fact, that the crux of the soul's predicament in the material world is to think that pleasure will produce happiness and fulfillment.

I worry what will happen to the body-bound soul's already dim awareness of the spiritual dimension when the products of modern technology can so quickly transport us—mentally if not physically—to our desired abodes of pleasure. When we can sit in our living rooms and gaze into wall-sized video screens of worlds that fulfill whatever our hearts desire, how will we be inspired to look inward?

By boredom, for one thing. And dissatisfaction. The scriptures, realized souls, and our own experience teach us that even when we acquire whatever pleasure we think will satisfy us, it never does. We're always looking for more, like the deer searching the forest for the alluring fragrance of musk, not knowing he is producing it himself.

Still, despite our inevitable dissatisfaction, can we overcome the intoxicating lure of easily accessible pleasure? The Vedic scriptures say yes, because we're spiritual beings and our innate attraction to the spiritual reality—and to Kṛṣṇa—can never be smothered to extinction. Our dissatisfaction with material pleasure is itself a hint of our higher, spiritual identity.

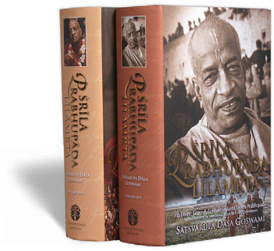
The power of the soul's attraction to Kṛṣṇa Himself is in fact stronger than the hold His material energy exerts upon the soul. But we're like headstrong children and want to enjoy independent of Kṛṣṇa. So, like a covered magnet, our natural attraction to Him is blocked.

The solution is to uncover our love for Kṛṣṇa, and in that quest, technology can help us. Technology is the manipulation of matter, or the material energy. The source of that energy is Kṛṣṇa, and how we use it determines whether it's good or bad. Using the material energy to stay under its grip is bad; using it to return to our original, spiritual, home is good.

I'm thankful for the contributions technology makes toward my spiritual life, beginning with the printing press that produced the first book I ever read about Kṛṣṇa. I'm thankful for the ship that carried Śrīla Prabhupāda to the West and for the planes that transported him around the world a dozen times.

Central to the practice (and perfection) of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to always remember Kṛṣṇa. Technology can distract our minds from Kṛṣṇa, no doubt, but if we make the right choice, today it can also connect us to Kṛṣṇa—anywhere, anytime. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda



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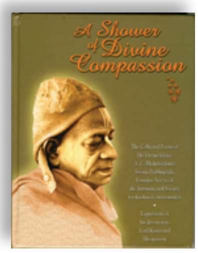

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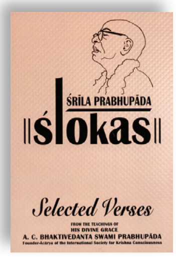

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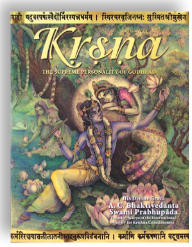

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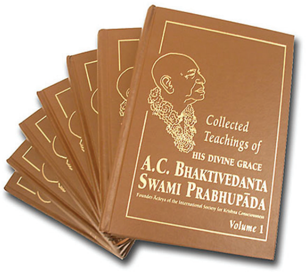

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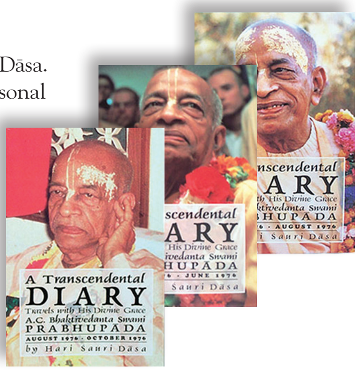

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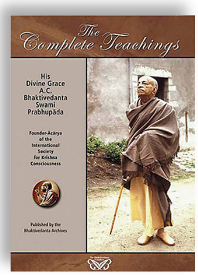

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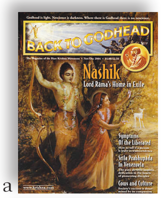
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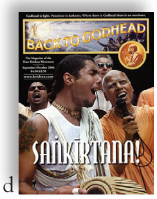
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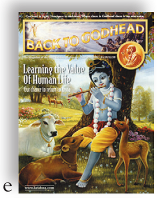
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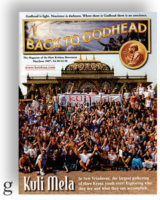
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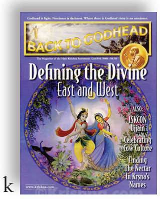
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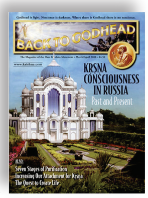
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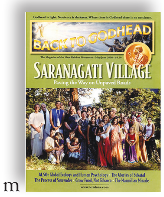
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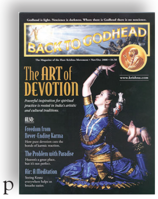
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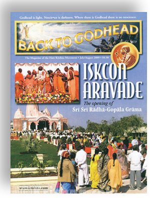
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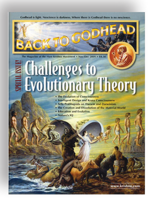
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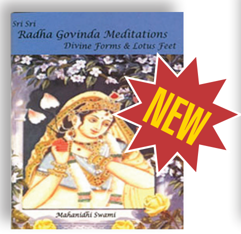
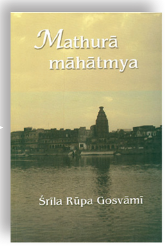
Books

Bhakti-ratnākara—By Śrī Narahari Cakravartī. This book describes the lives of devotees after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Softbound, 431 pages, 6½" x 9½". Printed in India. ~~$39.95~~ **SALE $23.99** S2BH908



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda Meditations, Divine Forms & Lotus Feet—By Mahānidhi Swami. Auspicious markings on the soles of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's feet are beautifully described and explained. Softbound, 51 pages, 4" x 5". Printed in India. ~~$3.95~~ **SALE $1.99** S2BS694



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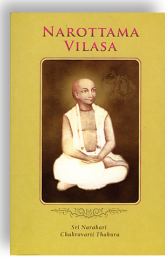

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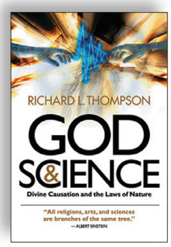

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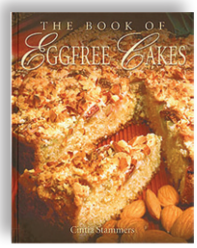

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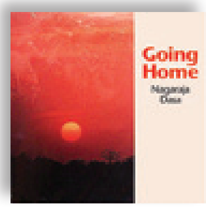

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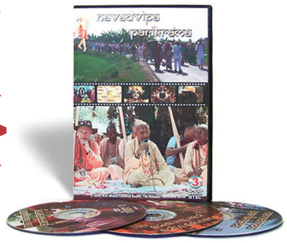

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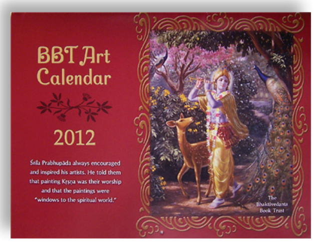

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VEDIC THOUGHTS

Pure devotees of the Lord are more powerful than the waters of the sacred river Ganges. One can derive spiritual benefit out of prolonged use of the Ganges waters. But one can be sanctified at once by the mercy of a pure devotee of the Lord.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.15, Purport

Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the chief function of the living entity. There are different methods for the liberation of the conditioned soul—karma, *jñāna,* yoga, and *bhakti*—but all the others are dependent on *bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.17

By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, a man can attain perfection through performing his own work.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 18.46

The names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other words the names Hare Kṛṣṇa, indicate Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and the names Hare Rāma also refer to Rādhā-Govinda.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa* 11.67

The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11

My Lord, please free me, Your partial expansion, from the bondage created by Your Māyā. Please do this, O abode of supreme bliss, by directing me to the service of Your feet.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī
Commentary on
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.21

Understand this essential fact of life: life is temporary and full of all kinds of miseries. So take shelter of the holy name as your only business.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Aruṇodaya-kīrtana 1.6

As soon as one becomes inimical to Kṛṣṇa and desires sense gratification, he is immediately struck down by the illusory energy of the Lord.

Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita
Prema Vivarta 2

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, sometimes descends to the world of men with His associates and transcendental abode. He removes the burden of the earth and delights His devotees.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Aiśvarya-kadambini 2.6

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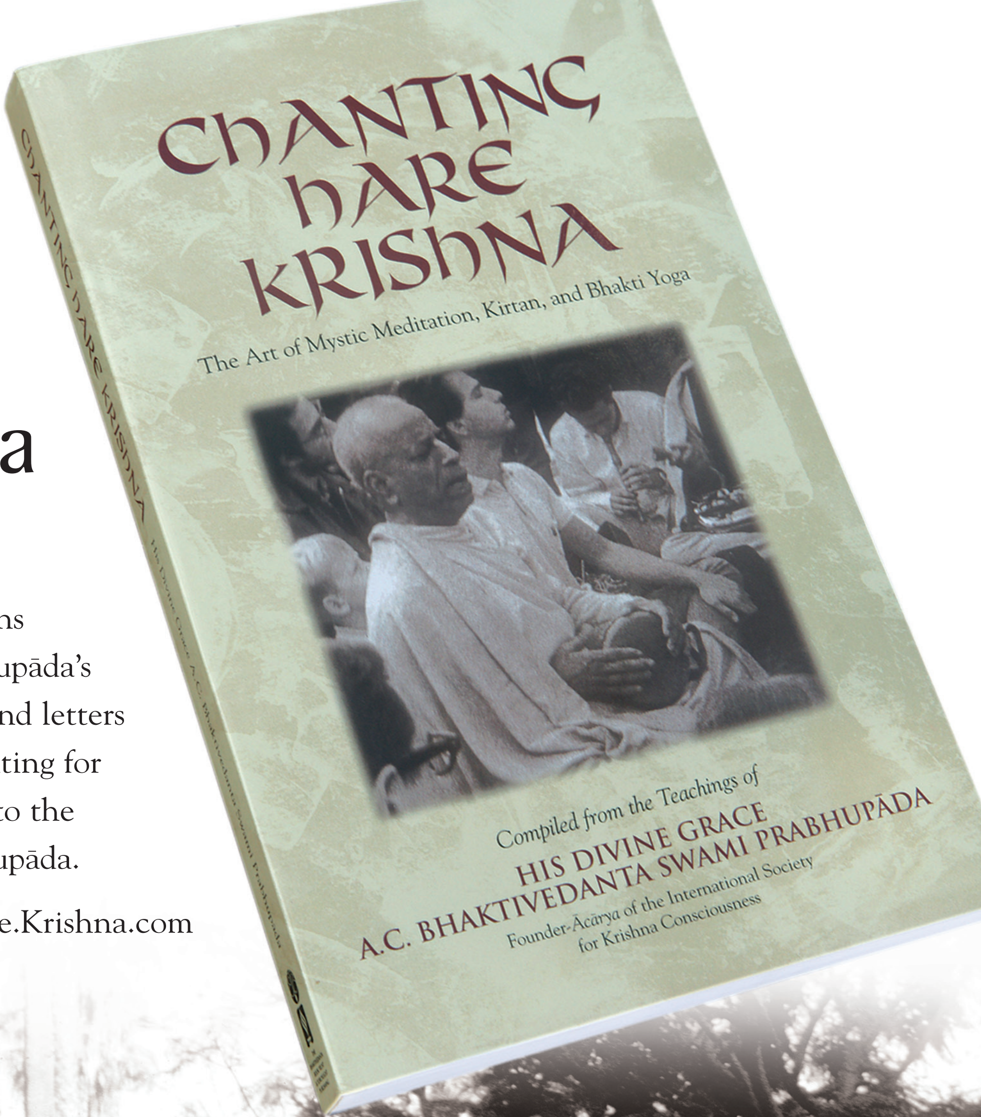
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